

Get collecting, get reading

Taken on page 15

FREE BOOKS SCHOOLS

Stephen Lawrence, the police and a new earthyism

Eat out for only a fiver

Taken page 47

30p EVERY WEEKDAY

Fantasy Football League: How did your team get on? Page 46

Storm over advice to teenage mothers

'Give babies for adoption' call by Straw

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

JACK STRAW was at the centre of a storm last night after saying that more teenage mothers should give up their babies for adoption.

The Home Secretary blamed "well-meaning but misguided" social workers for over-estimating the ability of many young women to cope with the financial and emotional burdens of motherhood.

As a result, too many infants ended up being taken into council care and kept in "a state of limbo" until a suitable home could be found for them with foster carers or adopters.

Mr Straw told a conference organised by the Family Policy Studies Centre: "It is in no one's interests, not the mother's, not the child's, nor the prospective parents', to allow a situation to develop whereby a crisis point is reached in the baby's first year because the ability of the mother to cope has been misjudged by well-meaning but misguided people."

While not actually proposing a return to the practice of coercing unmarried young women into having their baby adopted, Mr Straw said that such a decision often resulted in a better life for the child: "If you get to a situation where young mothers feel happy about adoption, that's so much the better. It is better if these adoptions are done voluntarily than if the children are later taken into care," he said.

Mr Straw said that he had been surprised to discover that



there were as many as 3,500 children aged under two in council care, while many childless couples waiting to adopt were kept waiting for years. The Government had issued new guidance to remove unnecessary barriers to adoption, he said, but added: "It is still a sad fact that many suitable couples have been on waiting lists for too long, while children have remained in care."

It had become "a matter of fashion" to move away from adoption, he said. In 1968, there were nearly 25,000 adoptions compared with fewer than 6,000 a year now.

Mr Straw's comments were, however, immediately attacked by adoption workers. Pam Hodgkins, manager of the West Midlands Post Adoption Services, said that removing a baby from its mother could be extremely damaging

for both parent and child. Adoption was nearly always the second best option for a child, while women who gave up their children in the 60s experienced health problems and mental illness.

Relicity Collier, director of the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, said that more than 70 per cent of children in care returned to their natural families within a year. "We need to encourage support for all mothers, whatever their situation."

Chris Davies, president of the Association of Directors of Social Services, rejected the Home Secretary's criticism of social workers, but conceded that more could be done to speed up the adoption process. "The reason there are very few babies now offered for adoption is not because social workers discourage it, but because nowadays most mothers in this situation never see a social worker at all," he said.

Veronica Agius, who was forced to give her illegitimate daughter away for adoption 33 years ago, said: "I think about it every day. I have never had any other children, and my daughter says she is not ready to make contact with me. It is my deepest regret."

But Sheila Walker, 59, who gave up her baby son for adoption in 1959, said that it had been the best decision for both of them. "I am glad I made that sacrifice for him."

Trying to help, page 7



Carla Germaine and Greg Cordell after their blind date wedding yesterday

Blind date couple meet on their wedding day

By PETER FOSTER

IT WAS billed as a "scientific experiment in love" and yesterday, after an intimate ceremony attended only by close family, friends and a national television company, the guinea pigs in Britain's first "blind" wedding were declared man and wife.

Carla Germaine, 23, a model, and Greg Cordell, 28, a sales manager, met for the first time and were married at 1pm yesterday after winning a competition called "Two Strangers and a Wedding", organised by a Birmingham commercial radio station.

Let them forget who brought them together, the moment of union was sealed by rings engraved with the station's logo: "96.4FM BRMB".

For the marketing men it was a marriage made in heaven — half the world's press were present as the nervous couple paraded before the cameras for their first taste of a new life destined to be played out under the uncompromising gaze of the British media.

After spending their first night together in the £750 Chamberlain Suite at Birmingham's Hyatt hotel, they will jet off for a honeymoon in the Bahamas — with a tabloid newspaper reporter and a fly-on-the-wall documentary team in tow. On their return they will receive a new Ford sports car for a year, and the run of a £1,500-a-month apartment in Birmingham's recently renovated canal land. But at midnight on January 25, 2000, they must return the keys and find a new home.

The newlyweds, who have signed a pre-nuptial agreement in case things do not work out, were yesterday

quick to scotch suggestions that the wedding was more an exercise in media manipulation than love. "Everyone's expecting us to split up," Mr Cordell said, "but we're going to prove them wrong."

His new wife agreed: "Everyone has their own opinion but we're looking forward to getting to know each other. I know what I like and I'm very pleased and happy. I told them from day one what I was looking for and this is very good." When asked if they were going to consummate the union last night, she said: "You'll never know."

The public will have little difficulty keeping up with the Cordells' progress. As well as a documentary on Channel 4 and regular radio updates on BRMB, they have already been invited on the *David Letterman Show* in New York.

While church leaders and marriage guidance organisations protested that the serious business of marriage was being turned into a media circus, BRMB, one of the nation's most popular radio stations, promised to broadcast the ceremony live. However, the registrar drew the line at sharing it with 700,000 listeners.

Mike Owen, BRMB's head of publicity, defended the wedding as a "serious matrimonial exercise". He said: "We shall be giving Greg and Carla all the support they need. We want the marriage to last as long as possible. They were selected very carefully as the couple most likely to be compatible from the 200 entries we received."

Mr Owen said the station would probably pay for any future divorce proceedings.



Chris Merson

Chris Merson said Mr Merson killed by ill chance. When the wrong bus was on the bus, or at the route. He asked if he had been threatened by a bus, a W6, that

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Hussein chooses his eldest son

King Hussein of Jordan confirmed by royal decree that his eldest son, Prince Abdullah, 36, is his heir, not the King's son, Prince Hamzah, or the King's brother, Prince Hassan, who had been Crown Prince for 34 years. Page 13

Athlete fails test

A British athlete has failed a dope test. A UK Athletics spokeswoman said that for legal reasons she could not give the name, the gender or the substance involved. Page 32

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I'm sorry about the little girls — kidnap case man

By ADRIAN LEE

A MAN accused of kidnapping and seriously assaulting two schoolgirls said yesterday that he was sorry for what had happened to them and wished that he could turn back the clock.

Alan Hopkinson, 45, of Langney, Eastbourne, made the statement through his solicitor after appearing at Hastings Magistrates' Court in East Sussex.

He was charged with ten offences: two each of child abduction, kidnapping and false imprisonment and four relating to serious assaults. The court was told that the girls, both aged ten, could not be named. The former Rhodesian Army soldier and Bank of England worker said nothing during his five-minute appearance. He stared intently at the floor and nodded only to confirm his name and that he understood the terms of his remand. No application was

made for bail and he was remanded in custody for a week. He was also granted legal aid.

After the hearing, Mr Hopkinson's solicitor, Graeme White, made a statement from the steps of the court, saying: "He has asked me to say he is sorry for what happened to the little girls. I hasten to say that no specific admissions are be-



Graeme White, solicitor

ing made. He does hope that they can put matters behind them, given the passage of time, and he has asked me to say that he could put the clock back. He wishes to express his remorse."

Mr White said that his client, who was arrested on Friday, was "depressed and upset" and had been prescribed sleeping tablets. "Obviously it had been a great shock to him to be brought to the police station and held for several days."

Mr Hopkinson, who wore grey trousers and a light grey jacket over a blue pullover, was brought to court from the neighbouring police station through an underground tunnel. Two police officers and two security guards were also in the packed courtroom. An order was made that no picture of Mr Hopkinson should be published.

Bid to end Clinton trial quashed

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

LEADING Republicans yesterday quashed a new attempt to complete President Clinton's trial this week, in a day of plots and accusations that left the impeachment process in chaos.

Trent Lott, the Senate Republican Majority Leader, poured cold water on a bipartisan plan for a "yes or no" vote by Friday on the two articles of impeachment that would have avoided calling witnesses. Although he appeared to have been swayed by House conservatives, however, many of his colleagues admitted that they deeply wanted an early end to the saga, which is exasperating Americans.

The plan, put forward by Tom Daschle, the leader of the Senate Democrats, would have left open the option of a vote to censure the President. Its failure has left both parties searching for a solution, terrified that the process will be-

come uncontrollable if witnesses are called to the Senate floor.

If Monica Lewinsky is called, the nation will be treated to the unpalatable sight of elderly men questioning a troubled young woman about the already well-chronicled details of her sex life. They also fear that if she is called, they will have to summon everyone mentioned in her testimony.

While floundering in the quagmire of the witness question, Congress had the benefit of a new round of observations by Dick Morris, Mr Clinton's former adviser, who himself resigned over a sex scandal. Mr Clinton was "delusional", he said, in feeling victimised when the Lewinsky scandal first erupted, but certainly believed his own line that he had not had sex with the young trainee.

Leading lady, page 15

Golfer's amazing 59 sinks the competition

FROM MEL WEBB

IT WAS, in its way, like six shoes in an over to win a cricket match, a maximum 147 in the final frame to claim a victory on the snooker table, or breaking a world record to win a gold medal in the 1,500 metres in the Olympic Games.

What David Duval, the American golfer, achieved was nothing less than a slice of sporting immortality.

A score of 59 in golf is a mystical figure, a barrier that goes beyond the psychological. Like its counterparts in other sports, it requires high skill. Unlike them, it calls for that skill to be exercised — and concentration maintained — for upwards of five

hours. A 59 needs par figures to be beaten for up to 13 times in 18 holes; club golfers everywhere will know that for the merely mortal, one birdie a round is cause for celebration.

The feat has never been achieved in European professional golf and until Sunday had occurred only twice in America — on neither occasion on the final day of the tournament.

Duval did not only score 59 to win; he needed to score 59 to win.

The undemonstrative Duval, 27, started the final day of the Bob Hope Classic, at La Quinta Golf Club, in California, six shots behind the leader and seemingly out of the picture.

A quiet but grimly determined performer, he had calculated overnight that he might need 59 to claim his second win of the season. Confident performer though he is, he cannot truly have expected to do so.

In the end, Duval, who has been one of the most in-form golfers in the world for the last 14 months, during which time he has won six times, took the title by one shot. With this victory he boosted his earnings by \$540,000 (£328,000) and took his earnings this year to \$1,008,000. Pity the man who finished second. He only had a 66.

Shot-by-shot, page 50



Duval: has won \$1m in 99

Familiar old words mark passing of the age of consent

Many go into law or Parliament solely so that they can say "buggery" whenever they like, and before the Nine o'Clock Watershed. This sketch lost count yesterday of how often the Home Secretary said it, but as Jack Straw said "buggery" for the fifth time, I sensed an astonishing lack of interest.

Every now and then, an issue dies in the Commons. No death is announced, no obituary placed in *The Times*, indeed there is no corpse to

bury. The death is more subtle. One day you go into the Chamber and an issue is alive and kicking. Two opposing sides, confident of their cause, clash. Sparks fly.

Some months later you return to the same debate... and life has ebbed away. The arguments may be unchanged, but one side, now, is only going through the motions. They've given up. Nobody is so vulgar as to crow, but the winners and losers know who they are.

As a Parliamentary contro-

versy, Age of Consent is dead. The dogs may bark but the circus has moved on. The concessions contained in the Sexual Offences Bill launched by the Home Secretary yesterday — measures to protect the vulnerable from those in charge of them — have swung it for reform. Once swung, the dead weight of "commonsense" opinion among politicians is mighty hard to swing back.

How do we know that Age of Consent has died? MPs sense such things through



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

their pores. Ask not what they are saying — everyone always says the same thing — but how they are saying it, and who is talking. To know the wind, focus not on Members who can change the wind, but those who are changed by the wind. Joe Ashton (Lab, Bassetlaw) is as persuasive a wind-

sock as you will find at Westminster. If a tabloid newspaper could speak, it would talk like Joe Ashton. To get his measure, ponder the phrase "right-minded folk". It is one of Mr Ashton's favourites. In the 1980s, right-minded folk were not campaigning to reduce

the age of consent from 21. Nor was Mr Ashton. In 1994, right-minded folk could more or less stomach a reduction to 18. So could Mr Ashton. Last year, right-minded folk remained worried about the corruption of the young and opposed 16. So did Mr Ashton.

Now, right-minded folk grit their teeth and accept "equality" so long as there is statutory protection for those at school or in institutions. Mr Ashton has urged just such a measure. It is in the Bill. And

Ashton now supports the Bill. He told MPs so yesterday. "I'd like to thank the *Daily Mail* and the *Express*", he repeated, proceeding to read out an armful of newspaper clippings about paedophiles and their vile rings, "tuning in" to the Internet. Shocking. But the shock was routine.

Only one speech caught fire. It is not often a quiet backbencher can hold the whole House for twenty minutes with a speech as reasoned as it is heartfelt. Shaun Woodward

(C) has sometimes seemed a bland successor to Douglas Hurd as MP for Wincey. Yesterday, supporting the Bill against the predominant opinion of his own side, he emerged as a noble one.

Otherwise there was little to raise a cheer, an eyebrow or even a smile. Gerald Howarth (C, Aldershot), trying for the cheer, achieved the smile. "You simply cannot have it both ways!" he cried, opposing the Bill. Can't you? Some of his colleagues have proved otherwise.

MP compares gay laws to slave shame

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A TORY MP last night compared equalising the age of consent for homosexual and heterosexual sex to giving women the vote.

Supporting the latest move to reduce the age of consent for homosexual sex to 16, Shaun Woodward (Wincey) told the Commons: "I believe that historians will look back on this period of discrimination against young people with the same opprobrium that we now look back on those who sought to justify the slave trade."

Mr Woodward, a director of the charity Childline, said the issue was about "whether a relationship between an adult and a young person should be a criminal act. This is not about urging young people to be promiscuous. It is not about anal intercourse. It is a debate about whether society should consider these people to be criminals at 16 just because of their sexuality."

He added: "As a Conservative, I believe in freedom and the rule of law. Why should the law intervene in the private affairs of citizens when it does no harm to others?"

The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill will equalise the age of consent at 16 in England, Scotland and Wales, and 17 in Northern Ireland. It

will also make it illegal for anyone over 18 to have sex with a 16 or 17-year-old over whom they are in a position of trust.

The protection was proposed by the Government after fears were expressed when the issue was last debated. The measures would protect those in full-time education, residential care, foster homes and secure accommodation, and hospitals. Those found guilty of the new offence could face two years in jail. Codes of conduct would protect the young in areas of the voluntary sector not covered by the Bill.

The measure is expected to pass easily through the Commons but to face fierce opposition in the Lords. The last attempt to cut the age of legal homosexual sex, through an amendment to the Crime and Disorder Bill last June, was backed by the Commons by a 207 majority. The Lords defeated it by a majority of 168 after concerns were voiced about putting vulnerable young people at greater risk.

Opening the Second Reading debate, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said the age of consent must be equalised because the discrimination was in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. "This is not a question

of encouraging one lifestyle as against another or of encouraging young people to have sex," he said. "It is a question of equality before the law."

Mr Straw said the new "abuse of trust" offence was designed to protect the most vulnerable young people from adults where the relationship of trust was most strong.

Some MPs, including Donald Anderson (Lab, Swansea East), protested that the protective measures in the Bill did not go far enough and should include those looking after Scouts and Guides and holiday camps. "Why are you so timid and limited on this?" Mr Anderson asked Mr Straw.

Stuart Bell (Lab, Middlesbrough) asked Mr Straw to confirm that the Government did not plan to cut the age of consent to 14 or legalise homosexual marriages. Mr Straw replied: "We have no plans to bring forward legislation in respect to any of these issues."

Sir Norman Fowler, Shadow Home Secretary, said people did not take a prejudiced view of the issue but had concerns about whether the young might be at risk. "The majority would prefer this change not to be made. We should listen to the public and not move further to reduce the age of consent."



Mairead Kelly, speaking for the relatives of dead IRA members, after meeting Adam Ingram at Stormont yesterday

Beatings may prompt prompt sanctions

By MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Government hinted at sanctions yesterday unless Northern Ireland's wave of punishment attacks were ended.

At meetings with the political representatives of the three main paramilitary groups, Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, demanded the "atrocious, barbaric" attacks be halted. "There were suggestions about what she could do in the future if she so chose," David Ervine, of the Progressive Unionist Party, acknowledged afterwards.

The Government is facing intense pressure to suspend terrorist prisoner releases until the attacks stop. The Tories have called a Commons debate on the issue to-

morrow and two senior Labour backbenchers, Harry Barnes and Frank Field, yesterday tabled a Commons motion saying the releases should be slowed "as a political sanction against an... organised regime of increasingly brutal intimidation".

Dr Mowlam said she would review the situation in a week or two if the attacks continued, but Tony Blair has admitted that halting prisoner releases could bring down the Good Friday peace accord.

Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness refused to meet Dr Mowlam, claiming she had changed the original purpose of the meeting, and sent more junior members of Sinn Féin instead. Mr McGuinness said his party deplored "punishment attacks", but blamed the lack of a police service that nationalists could trust.

Mr Ervine, whose party represents the Ulster Volunteer Force, called the attacks "immoral and reprehensible" and urged people to report problems to the police.

The human rights group Families Against Intimidation and Terror accused republican and loyalist paramilitaries of 37 beatings and shootings this month alone. Government officials suspect Sinn Féin and the loyalist parties can tone down paramilitary violence when it suits them.

Relatives of IRA victims angrily confronted the families of eight IRA men killed on a bombing mission yesterday. The republican families were leaving Stormont after a meeting with Adam Ingram, the Northern Ireland Security Minister, when the victims' relatives cried "shame" and "apologise" and held up posters.

NEWS IN BRIEF

20-year-old death case: OAP held

A pensioner has been arrested in connection with the murder of an unknown woman who was bludgeoned to death nearly 20 years ago, after DNA testing led to the reopening of the case.

Detectives from Kent travelled to the north of England yesterday in a renewed effort to establish the identity of the young woman, thought to be a hitchhiker or prostitute, whose body was found in Bedgebury Forest, near Goudhurst, in October 1979.

The case was re-opened in October last year after forensic tests were carried out on evidence stored since the 1979 inquiry. Two weeks ago a Kent lorry driver in his early 50s was arrested in connection with the murder and released on police bail.

Helicopter base

A new joint service helicopter command will be based at Wiltton in Wiltshire, the Ministry of Defence announced yesterday. The headquarters of the combined RAF, Army and Navy unit will control more than 350 helicopters at 10 air bases. It will have around 12,000 personnel and oversee a budget of £300 million.

Fee protest ends

Five Oxford students who were barred from university premises for refusing to pay their tuition fees said yesterday that they had decided to end their protest. Academics voted last week to suspend the four Somerville undergraduates and one from St Hilda's unless they ended their protest immediately.

Uniform reverse

A university has dropped plans to charge student nurses £100 each for the uniforms they must wear while training, after complaints from Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary. Kingston-upon-Thames University intended that 100 trainees should buy them out of their £5,300 annual bursary for living costs.

Collymore case

Stan Collymore, the Aston Villa footballer, admitted speeding at 82mph in a 40mph zone. He did not attend Birmingham Magistrates' Court because he was in club talks about his future. The bench is considering a driving ban and adjourned the hearing until February 8 for Collymore to attend. Under stress, page 49

Delayed justice

William Geary, 100 years old, was fired from Irish police after allegedly accepting a £100 bribe from the IRA over 70 years ago. After persistently lobbying successive governments for a review of his case, it has now been referred to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform by the Prime Minister.

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Pensions left £1bn short by computer troubles

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

THE Government is sitting on nearly £1 billion which it has failed to pay into private and occupational pension schemes because of the bungled launch of a new computer system.

The problems with Europe's largest civilian computer system, which cost £140 million, are also forcing benefits to be calculated by guesswork for more than a million claimants, including pensioners, widows, unemployed and sick people.

The 160,000 new pensioners so far affected are losing an average £130 a week, although some are losing as much as £100 a week. Fewer than 15 per cent of Britons who invest in private or occupational pensions have had contributions paid promptly by the Department of Social Security.

When the computer crisis is resolved and the payments are finally made, savers will be offered compensation by the Government at an interest rate of 6 per cent a year. Pension companies argue that customers with schemes that in-

vest in the stock market could have achieved a much better rate of interest and will have no chance to make up the difference.

Quentin Davies, Conservative social security spokesman, said: "Just paying the rebate with interest is not satisfactory. People must be put back in the position they would be in if the Government had not made these mistakes."

The Contributions Agency has said that it will only pay compensation to people owed £100 or more. "This is grossly unfair," said David Kendall, Liberal Democrat social security spokesman. "For people who are living on or near the breadline, even a few pounds a week makes all the difference."

The National Audit Office said the computer system had 1,900 problems, of which 1,589 had been unresolved. The computer switch began last July after three years' preparation. The supplier, Andersen Consulting, worked through the Christmas holiday with Contr-

butions Agency staff in Newcastle upon Tyne but failed to clear the backlog. Andersen Consulting has paid £37 million compensation to the DSS.

Those with most to lose are new claimants, including people reaching pensionable age, becoming unemployed or widowed. Already 1.2 million people on jobseeker's allowance, 374,000 on incapacity benefit and 25,000 widows are affected. They cannot be sure of receiving the correct amount because their benefits are calculated on the basis of national insurance paid, and many of those payments are not yet on the computer.

The Government had been warned against introducing the new National Insurance Recording Computer System (NIRS2) at the same time as reforming pensions.

Stephen Timmins, a Social Security Minister, said: "It will take until the end of this financial year to resume normal operations, and it will take longer to catch up on all backlogs."

ITV has good news for Bond

By CAROL MIDDLEY, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

JAMES BOND will be among the first to benefit from the demise of *News At Ten*. ITV confirmed yesterday that the last of its full 10pm bulletins would go out on Friday, March 5. The first interrupted film to be screened across its slot will be the 007 adventure *GoldenEye*.

Executives also promised that comedy, factual programmes, drama and a new current-affairs programme with Trevor McDonald would fill the vacant airtime to try to increase ITV's audience share.

Feature-length dramas such as *Kavanagh QC* will get late peaktime slots, and at 10.30pm there will be new comedies, such as the forthcoming 1970s teen show *Days*

Like *These*. *GoldenEye* will be screened on March 10.

ITV halted its audience decline last year and this year it would try to reverse it. Chief executive Richard Eyre told advertisers yesterday. The huge success of quiz show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* helped ITV to push its 1998 audience share to 39 per cent.

Entertainment formats will be piloted to try to repeat the success of *TV Nightmares*, *Man O Man*, *Give Your Mate a Break* and *Truth or Consequences*, all of which get series this year. Mr Eyre said: "How-ever great we make ITV, I don't think it is reasonable to imagine we can make it so fabulous that people decide not to go multi-channel."

Watchdog to lift lid on MPs' gifts

By ROLAND WATSON, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MPs would be forced to declare all gifts, loans and hospitality from fellow members of Parliament under a new interpretation of rules by the incoming Parliamentary Commissioner.

Elizabeth Filkin made clear yesterday that she believes a 25-year-old understanding of the interests MPs have to publish should be overhauled following the Peter Mandelson home loan affair. It accepted by the Commons, the change would lift the lid for the first time on gifts and hospitality, including the loan of holiday homes, between MPs.

The proposal would cover gifts to an MP or their spouse from another MP of more than £125, as well as other benefits worth more than £25. It

is likely to alarm some MPs who regard such deals as private affairs.

However, in her first public comments since Mr Mandelson resigned from government following the revelation of his £375,000 loan from Geoffrey Robinson, the former Paymaster-General, Ms Filkin said that all arrangements between MPs should be declared in the interests of transparency.

Mr Mandelson registered his loan on her advice, but Ms Filkin, who takes over from Sir Gordon Downey next month, made clear she had not cleared him. She is still to report to the Commons Standards and Privileges Select Committee on whether she believes he should be censured.

Yemen wants to try London cleric

Daniel McGrory and Stephen Farrell on Sana'a's frustration over Britain's perceived inaction

YEMEN yesterday asked Britain to extradite the extremist Muslim cleric Sheikh Abu Hamza al Masri, whom it accuses of masterminding the kidnap of 16 Western tourists last month. Security chiefs in the capital Sana'a say that the controversial London-based religious leader is also behind a plot to blow up British targets in Aden.

The demand comes just days before five British Muslims are put on trial for their lives, accused of being behind the failed Christmas Day plot. At least three of the Britons are said to have confessed that they were sent to Yemen by Sheikh Hamza, who preaches at the Finsbury Park mosque in North London.

The Egyptian-born cleric, who lost both his hands in Afghanistan, is also leader of the Supporters of Shariah group, which advocates the rule of Islamic law and whose Internet web page offered military training and depicted a hand grenade.

Security sources in Yemen say he ordered the British Muslims to contact Abu Hassan, leader of the December 28 kidnap which led to the deaths

of three British tourists and an Australian, and received a satellite telephone call from Hassan during the abduction. In their confessions the men say Sheikh Hamza gave them \$2,000 (£1,250) to pay Abu Hassan for the weapons and their training at his terrorist base.

A security source in Sana'a said last night: "We believe Hamza is the mastermind behind both these terrorist operations. As the British police do not seem to be taking action against him we want to see him put on trial here." They claim to have "irrefutable evidence" linking Sheikh Hamza to the kidnap and the bomb plot. Scotland Yard is still investigating Hamza's alleged involvement.

Yesterday, Ali Abdullah Saleh, the Yemeni President, gave Vice Henderson, the British Ambassador, a message for Tony Blair, asking that Sheikh Hamza be handed over. The official news agency

SABA said the letter called for Sheikh Hamza's extradition "for committing acts of terrorism and sabotage in Yemen and in a number of Arab countries". The agency added: "The letter expresses the discontent of the Yemeni Government with the terrorist activities led by the terrorist Abu Hamza al Masri and other people from British territory."

Sheikh Hamza last night dismissed the extradition request, saying he would not receive a fair trial, criticised Yemen's human rights record and claimed the arrested Britons were tortured into making their confessions.

He insisted he had no involvement with terrorism in Yemen and claimed the same rights to freedom of speech as Salman Rushdie, pointing out that the author was granted protection when he caused offence to Muslims with *The Satanic Verses*. "If you are talk-

ing about the truth as terrorism I cannot deny that, but if you class sending people for terrorist activities then I had nothing to do with it," he said. "Salman Rushdie's words sicken your heart and my words are ugly in your ears, but my words are the truth and his are false."

Although Yemen has no extradition agreement with Britain, the Home Office said last night that an ad hoc request would be considered in the same way as any other. However, a spokesman refused to discuss whether an application had been received, saying "we neither confirm nor deny extradition requests".

Among those arrested in Aden were Sheikh Hamza's stepson, Mohsen Ghallan, and an Algerian who is engaged to his sister. His 17-year-old son, Mohamed Kamal Mustapha, is still on the run.

The men's lawyer, Salim Basunaid, will complain about their treatment when they appear in court tomorrow. Their appearance in court comes after pressure from Whitehall for the Prosecutor General in Yemen to speed up their trial.



Sheikh Hamza outside the American Embassy in London in August after US aircraft bombed sites in Sudan

£50 watch helped thieves steal cars worth £350,000

BY MICHAEL HARVEY

A THIEF used a wristwatch to steal dozens of luxury cars after discovering it could unlock doors and switch off alarms, a court was told yesterday.

Sajjad Aslam used the £50 Casio watch, a programmable remote control for television sets and video recorders, to crack the codes on car key fobs. After programming the infra-red frequencies into his watch during test drives at car showrooms, he sent accomplices to steal the vehicles.

Minshull Street Crown Court in Manchester was told that Aslam, 29, masterminded a lucrative car-ringing racket for two years. He and his gang gave the stolen cars new identities and sold them through agents across Britain.

Previous owners' names in the false registration documents included the snooker star Steve Davis, the cricketer Wasim Akram and Alexander O'Neal, the soul singer. Police believe vehicles worth at least £350,000 were stolen, doctored and sold on. Makes included Mitsubishi Shogun, Toyota, Nissan and Rover.

Yesterday Aslam, from Stockport, was sentenced to four and a half years in jail after pleading guilty to masterminding the racket. Six accomplices admitted conspiracy to

steal and were jailed for periods ranging from nine months to two years.

The racket was discovered when police arrested one of the accomplices, Biny Amin, 32. He refused to take off his watch and suspicious officers sent it for testing: experts found the car codes.

Detective Constable Ian O'Connell led the inquiry, said watches like the CMD40 could be bought in any High Street. "These watches may be the sort of hi-tech items that 007 gets from Q in the James Bond movies but the fact is that they are very real and millions of cars are at risk of being stolen."

He added: "I have worked on car crime for eight years and have never seen anything like this."

A spokeswoman for Casio insisted the CMD40 could not be used to "grab" infra-red codes without the key owner's knowledge because the watch had to be placed within a few centimetres of the key fob. "We feel satisfied that the CMD40 presents no increased ability for car thieves," she said.

However, the AA said several million cars, mostly built before 1995, were potential victims to programmable remote controls.

Judge criticises parents for protecting paedophile head

BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

A JUDGE accused parents at a leading preparatory school yesterday of ignoring signs that the headmaster was a "fixated paedophile" because their main interest was the school's academic results, and some were enjoying fee discounts.

They rejected a "wealth of evidence", said Judge John Wroath, who chaired an independent Schools Tribunal into 12 complaints against Robin Lindsay, the headmaster and proprietor of Sherborne Preparatory School in Dorset. The three-strong panel unanimously ordered that Mr Lindsay, who resigned last June, should be barred from holding any school post.

The tribunal criticised the

Department for Education and Employment and Mr Lindsay's professional association for failing to take action more quickly. The first investigation into allegations of "inappropriate behaviour" took place in 1985 but an official notice of complaint was not served until last year.

The judge's most serious criticism was directed at the parents, who were said to have obstructed successive police and social services inquiries. Many continue to support Mr Lindsay, in spite of "serious and numerous concerns" expressed by inspectors, and consider traits such as walking around the school in pyjamas and an obsessive interest in

boys' physical development as merely eccentric.

Judge Wroath said: "The parents choose to ignore the wealth of evidence as to the appellant's unacceptable behaviour and grave shortcomings and cling to the perception that he was no more than eccentric."

Furthermore, in many cases they did not want to look too closely. The school was achieving the academic successes the parents were looking for and a number of them were enjoying substantial reductions in fees.

In Mr Lindsay's final year Sherborne had 41 boarders, whose fees were more than £8,000 a year, and 101 day pupils. Mr Lindsay, who is now

70 and was headmaster for 26 years, withdrew his appeal against disqualification, waiving his right to contest the allegations. The complaints included charges of maladministration and regular lateness or absence from lessons.

The tribunal found that there was insufficient evidence to uphold three complaints of sexual assault made by former pupils. It did, however, accept the view of a forensic psychiatrist that Mr Lindsay was a "fixated paedophile".

See Greene, who had two children at the school between 1981 and 1986, said: "The judge's comments are infuriating. How dare he suggest that we turned a blind eye?"

Pupil and teacher 'had sex at school'

BY ADAM FRISCO

A WOMAN told yesterday how she became lovers with her history teacher when she was a "besotted" 14-year-old. The former pupil, now 28, said that she and Daniel Angadi had sex on school premises and that he took topless pictures of her when she was a pupil at an independent girls' school in London. "I was desperately in love," she said.

Twice-married Mr Angadi, from Leytonstone, East London, denies five charges of indecent assault in 1985 and 1986. Su-

san Tapping, for the prosecution, said that although the charges were indecent assault they involved full intercourse.

The former pupil told Southwark Crown Court that the relationship developed after a school play which was written by Mr Angadi. Her mother, a single parent, was concerned about her progress at school and encouraged her to get extra help from Mr Angadi.

He became a close friend of her and her mother before the start of the sexual relationship, which ended in 1990. The woman said that she blurted out what

had happened between the two of them to her former English teacher at a school function last year.

Under cross-examination she admitted that she had felt "jealousy and rage" when she learnt that Mr Angadi had started an affair with another woman while she was at university. She denied that she had made the allegations only because she was upset to learn at the function that he was happily married.

Mr Angadi says that the sexual relationship began only after she had left school. The trial continues.

Ex-soldier puts the boot in for army footwear

BY SUSIE STEINER AND ELIZABETH JUDGE

A FORMER soldier is demanding compensation from the Ministry of Defence because he says that training in heavy combat boots caused permanent disability in his legs.

Christopher Hossack, 32, accused the MoD yesterday of negligence in letting him wear the boots for long-distance running. He says he was medically discharged from the Army and unable to earn a living.

The MoD, which contests the claim, told the High Court that Mr Hossack's problem was caused by flat feet.

Michael Curwen, for Mr Hossack, said: "Mr Hossack's case about the boot is not that it was entirely unsuitable for army use but simply it was not appropriate for as much running as he was required to do in it."

Mr Hossack, from Sunderland, joined the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in 1985 and took part in military training that involved running on Tarmac. He says he experienced pain in his ankles within a few weeks but put it down to his boots being new. Five months later he was given the highest fitness ranking possible and in 1988 was asked to join the battalion boxing team, which increased the intensity of his

training. After an operation in 1993 Mr Hossack was discharged in September 1994. He worked for a while as a lorry driver but has lived on incapacity benefit since 1997.

Mr Curwen said: "Mr Hossack has a crippling condition. He can't run at all, can't walk for more than a couple of hundred yards before feeling pain and he can't stand on his feet for any length of time."

He admitted his client suffered from flat feet. "We say that may have contributed to the problem but was not the source of the trouble."

Mr Hossack is suing the MoD for £400,000. The case continues.



Hossack told court he is unable to earn a living

Hitting circus animals does them no harm, says Chipperfield

BY HELEN JOHNSTONE



Ms Chipperfield denied cruelty to a chimpanzee

MARY CHIPPERFIELD, a prominent member of the world-famous circus family, yesterday told a court that kicking and hitting animals was not cruel.

Ms Chipperfield, seeking to justify hitting a crying baby chimpanzee because it refused to go to bed, said that inflicting pain did not necessarily harm animals. Ms Chipperfield, 61, denies 21 charges relating to animal cruelty and neglect, and said that she would do the same again.

Ms Chipperfield told Andover Magistrates' Court that she "really cared" about animals, but that kick-

ing a dog that was lying in the way or a chimpanzee that would not do as she wanted was acceptable.

Her husband, Roger Cawley, 64, a government zoo inspector, admitted flouting the rules he was appointed to enforce. Mr Cawley, who denies seven charges of cruelty and neglect, admitted under cross-examination that elephants at his farm had been shackled for 24 hours a day on several occasions.

Mr Cawley said that he had had the elephants shackled because "we were having staff problems and we didn't want to make staff work extra-long hours on Christmas Day". "I didn't think leaving them shack-

led would cause them unnecessary suffering," he said.

Both Ms Chipperfield, who appeared in court under her married name, Mary Cawley, and her husband admitted knowing that one of their keepers, who was recently sentenced to four months' imprisonment for cruelty to elephants, had previously been imprisoned for manslaughter.

Earlier, in evidence at the start of the second week of the trial, Ms Chipperfield said a change in the public perception of circuses had prompted her father, Jimmy, to reconsider what was good for animals and promote the freer environment

of wildlife parks by introducing the concept at Longleat in Wiltshire.

Ms Chipperfield told the court that she now did little animal training, concentrating instead on animal dealing. She said that during her career she had worked with more than 60 keepers, and that the thing they had complained about most was the harsh way she treated people.

Asked about her approach to the welfare of animals in her charge, Ms Chipperfield said she had bottled chimpanzees, lions, tigers and hippopotamuses in her home. She said that she had personally fed Trudi, the chimpanzee she is accused of

treating cruelly, hourly after it was nearly killed by an adult chimpanzee.

Trudi was later transferred to a cage where, Ms Chipperfield admitted, it spent 15 hours overnight in a darkened box.

Ms Chipperfield said that by the time chimpanzees were a year old, they had developed fangs, and that both she and her daughter had permanent scars after being bitten by them in the past.

Ms Chipperfield, who brought to court the sticks and whips she was seen using on several animals in a secretly filmed video, said that she suffered from arthritis and could

not use much force when wielding them. She admitted hitting the chimpanzee after it bit her finger.

"I gave her a couple of sharp ones. She would have felt them but they could not possibly have harmed her," she said. Asked to elaborate, she said that it was all right to cause pain when it did not do harm.

Charles Gabb, for the prosecution, told her: "You are master of all the animals in your kingdom. They will do as you say when you say. If they don't they will be beaten."

Ms Chipperfield replied: "Not beaten." Asked how she would describe their treatment, she replied: "Touched." The trial continues.

WINTER GERMS ARE BACK

Stewart Tandler on a case first treated as suicide

Mr. Menson, a 30-year-old rock musician with a history of mental illness, was found naked and severely burnt early on the morning of January



Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve appeals for witnesses to the murder two years ago of Michael Menson, supported at Scotland Yard by, left to right, Sam, Essie, Kwesi and Chris Menson.

Last year, an inquest jury returned a verdict of unlawful killing on Mr Menson after police had been criticised for their

Yesterday, supported by the
dead man's brothers and sis-

Two people have called the police anonymously and Essie

Mr Grieve said Mr Menson met his killers by ill chance. He had taken the wrong bus and met them on the bus, or at the end of the route. He asked if anyone else had been threatened on the bus, a W6, that night.

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

The man, aged 37, had been acquitted by a criminal court of attempted rape but in subsequent care proceedings a judge found he had abused three children in his care. He has since moved to a new area.

BY MARK HENDERSON

He says that the Health Secretary has "entirely misjudged" the crisis within the high-security hospital system and that his decision "may ultimately return to haunt him".

Letters page 19

BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

However, governors said

The Prison Service said that visitors found with drugs would continue to be reported to the police and would face possession charges.

A side profile view of a dark-colored Volvo 940 GLE sedan. The car is shown from the side, facing right. It has a boxy design characteristic of the 1990s, with large windows, a high roofline, and multi-spoke alloy wheels. The background is plain white.

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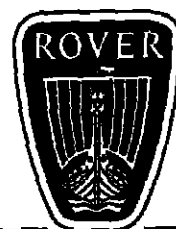
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Trying to help children of the revolution

Alexandra Frean looks at the social changes that have led to a new plan for unmarried mothers

IN THE early 1960s, when abortion was illegal, the children of unmarried teenage mothers were routinely taken away by social workers and given up for adoption. Within the space of two generations, unmarried motherhood is far more common and social workers are legally bound to prevent children having to be looked after away from their natural families.

The figures expose a revolution in social attitudes towards birth and marriage. In 1975, 9 per cent of all live births were outside marriage. The figure had risen to 23 per cent by 1985 and 37 per cent by 1997.

Among teenagers, the rates are even higher, putting Britain at the top of any league table.

Although the advent of the Pill has meant a decline in the overall number of babies born to teenagers - from 63,500 in 1975 to 41,900 in 1995 - the percentage of those births taking place outside marriage has soared. In 1975, 32 per cent of births to women aged under 20 were to unmarried mothers. This had risen to 89 per cent by 1997 - nearly nine out of every ten teenage births. At the

same time there has been a massive fall in adoptions. In 1968, at its peak, nearly 25,000 babies were adopted in Britain. Today the figure is closer to 6,000. In a recent study of teenage mothers, conducted by the Policy Studies Institute, one pregnant young woman summed up the feelings of many of her peers when she said she would rather have a termination than consider giving her baby away.

Partly as a result of these changes, there are now 1.6 million single-

parent families in Britain, with a total of 2.8 million dependent children, up from 570,000 one-parent families and one million children in 1971. These dramatic shifts in public attitude have profound implications for policy and the public purse.

Although reluctant to stigmatise single mothers, the Government is becoming increasingly concerned that, in allowing these trends to continue unchecked, it may be sowing the seeds of intractable social prob-

lems for years to come. Reluctant to alienate Cabinet supporters who see lone-parent families as an acceptable alternative lifestyle, the Prime Minister has chosen to tackle the problem by enticing more single mothers off benefits and into the workplace.

Given that a lone parent with one child under the age of 11 gets housing and other benefits worth £134 per week, and that there is a considerable body of evidence to show that children of working parents

perform better at school, it is seen by many as the policy line of least resistance.

The introduction of the working-family tax credit and a new childcare allowance means that the lone parent of one child under 11 would now be able to boost her income by £67 a week if she took a full-time (35-hour) job at the minimum wage of £3.60 an hour - enough to make a considerable difference to her child's lifestyle.

In addition to this incentive, sin-

gle parents will now be asked to show up for compulsory interviews at jobcentres before they can claim benefit, but with no loss of benefit if they fail to attend. There they will get one-to-one help from a personal adviser to find work, and top up their pay with the appropriate benefits and tax credits.

None of this, however, will succeed unless the Government can also improve access to high-quality, low-cost childcare. To this end it has launched a National Childcare Strategy, which is aiming to create one million extra day-care places for children aged 4 to 14.

Judge halts porn film blackmail hearing

By PAUL WILKINSON

A MAN accused of extorting almost £500,000 from a retired bank manager who bought a set of pornographic videos more than 20 years ago was cleared yesterday after a judge described the alleged victim's evidence as "inconsistent and unreliable".

During the eight-day trial, Brian Crossling was said to have used threats of exposure to force Mr X to hand over pension pay-outs, sell and remortgage his homes and even borrow from friends.

The case at Newcastle Crown Court collapsed when Mr X said in evidence: "He didn't blackmail me as such, there was never any threat." He said that he had felt sorry for Mr Crossling, who had told him of a family tragedy.

Mr Crossling, 40, from Roddymoor, Durham, denied blackmailing Mr X and demanding £449,500 between 1972 and July 1997.

Mr X said: "I took pity on him. Mr Crossling had a daughter who died. He was very depressed when it happened. She was about three and died from meningitis. He poured his heart out to me and asked me for some money. I felt sorry for him. He did not threaten me."

Judge David Wood told the jury: "There is no case against this defendant. Mr X's evidence was so inconsistent and unreliable that no jury could convict."

CJD victim's family wins verdict of misadventure

One meal of beef may have led to death, reports Simon de Bruxelles

A SINGLE meal of beef may have been responsible for the death of the first known victim of the human brain disorder linked to "mad cow" disease, an inquest was told yesterday.

The family of Stephen Churchill, who died aged 19 in 1995, told the inquest in Wiltshire of his descent from typical schoolboy to shambling wreck. They had fought for 3½ years for the right to an inquest into his death from the condition that has since become known as new-variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, after "natural causes" was originally recorded as the reason for the disorder.

Dr James Ironside, of the CJD surveillance unit at the University of Edinburgh, told the inquest that the schoolboy had almost certainly contracted the disease from eating sausages or burgers containing infected beef.

The West Wiltshire Coroner, David Masters, who recorded a verdict of misadventure, said: "On the balance of probabilities the route of transmission is due to the random

consumption of a meat product infected with BSE. It can be, and probably was, just one random consumption."

Since Stephen's death, 35 people have died of new-variant CJD and a further eight cases have been confirmed.

As the verdict came in, Stephen's mother Dot collapsed in tears. She was comforted by her husband David and daughter Helen. Mr Churchill said later: "It is quite a terrifying thought that one single meal could create such a dreadful disease in one person and randomly affect the rest of the population."

His wife added: "When the coroner said 'misadventure' it was like saying that Stephen should never have died. It brings it home that this disease was man-made. It should never have happened. There are so many young people dying from this and it is tragic."

Stephen, from Devizes, in Wiltshire, was a normal teenager with an impressive academic record and an ambition to become an RAF fighter pilot when he first began to show symptoms of brain dis-



Stephen Churchill with his mother Dorothy, father David and sister Helen. He died, aged 19, in 1995

ease. At first the symptoms were mild and attributed to depression. Stephen did surprisingly badly in his mock A levels and left the Air Cadets. Then in August 1994 he nearly died in his mother's car when he found himself inexplicably driving on the wrong side of the road. Soon Ste-

phen's co-ordination and memory began to fail and he was suffering frightening hallucinations. He became a virtual recluse, emerging only reluctantly from his bedroom.

Tests that he had in hospital suggested a degenerative brain disorder and his parents were told his condition was in-

curable. He was admitted to a nursing home, where he died in May 1995. Mrs Churchill said that it had crossed her mind that his illness resembled BSE, the then-mysterious infection killing cattle.

She said: "I did say to my husband that it might be related to BSE because you see the

cows staggering but we dismissed it as a stupid thought."

"We had a varied diet. One of [Stephen's] favourite foods was sausage. He did have burgers and spaghetti bolognese, all the foods everybody ate during the 1980s." Last year the Churchills gave evidence to the Government's BSE inquiry.

Tributes to the man who saved the Mail

THE late Viscount Rothermere, proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, was interested not only in history, newspapers and beautiful women, but also in reincarnation, the congregation at his memorial service in Westminster Abbey was told yesterday.

One of his editors, facing falling circulation but emboldened by drink, asked his boss if he was not worried that he might reappear in his next life as a road sweeper. Lord Rothermere immediately fielded the question: was the editor not worried that he himself might end up as a road sweeper in his present life?

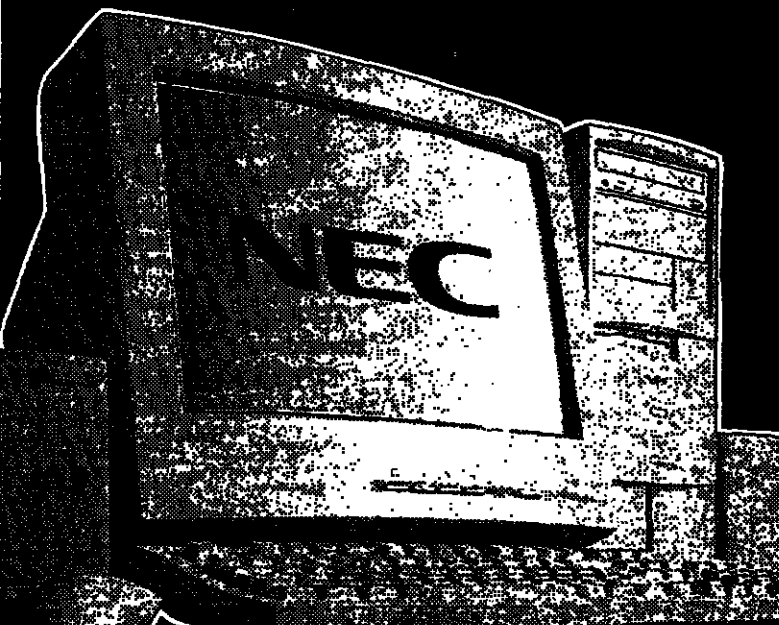
More than 1,100 people, led by Tony and Cherie Blair, William and Pippa Hargreaves and Sir Denis and Baroness Thatcher, filled the abbey to hear Paul Dacre, Editor-in-Chief of the *Mail*, describe his former chairman as the greatest newspaper proprietor of his age.

After inheriting the dying newspaper 27 years ago, Mr Dacre said, Lord Rothermere had not only rescued it by realising that there was a vast untapped market of emancipated women readers, he had also turned its owner, Associated Newspapers, into a major media empire.

"He possessed that rare alchemy of contradictory talents - a brilliant business mind and a talent for understanding the creative process of newspapers," Mr Dacre said.

Memorial service, page 20

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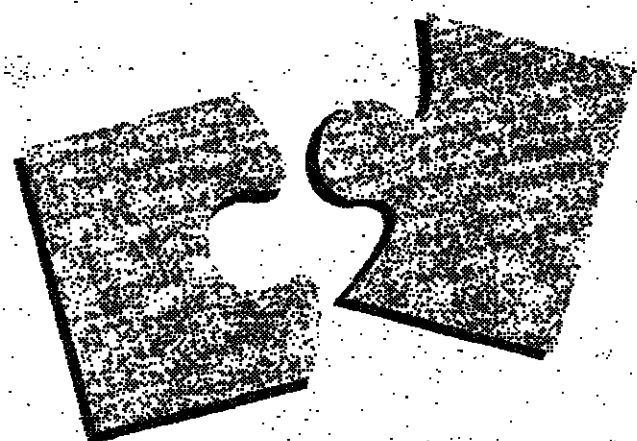
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Lecturer's lone bypass stand angers locals

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A LECTURER who gave up home and career to be an anti-roads protester was yesterday singlehandedly blocking the last stage of a new bypass.

Margaret Jones, who will be 50 on Saturday, is holed up in a derelict warehouse, the only remaining member of a group who broke in two weeks ago and declared "squatters' rights". Swathed in tarpaulins and yelling through a hole in the roof, Dr Jones said yesterday: "It was not a huge step for me to do this. Politics has always been in me and I am doing it because I believe in it."

Two years ago she was a lecturer in American literature at the University of the West of England in Bristol, with a house in the suburbs. She gave up her job in 1997 to devote herself to environmental protest. Two weeks ago Dr

Jones, who is single and does not have children, cut her final ties to her old life when she sold the house.

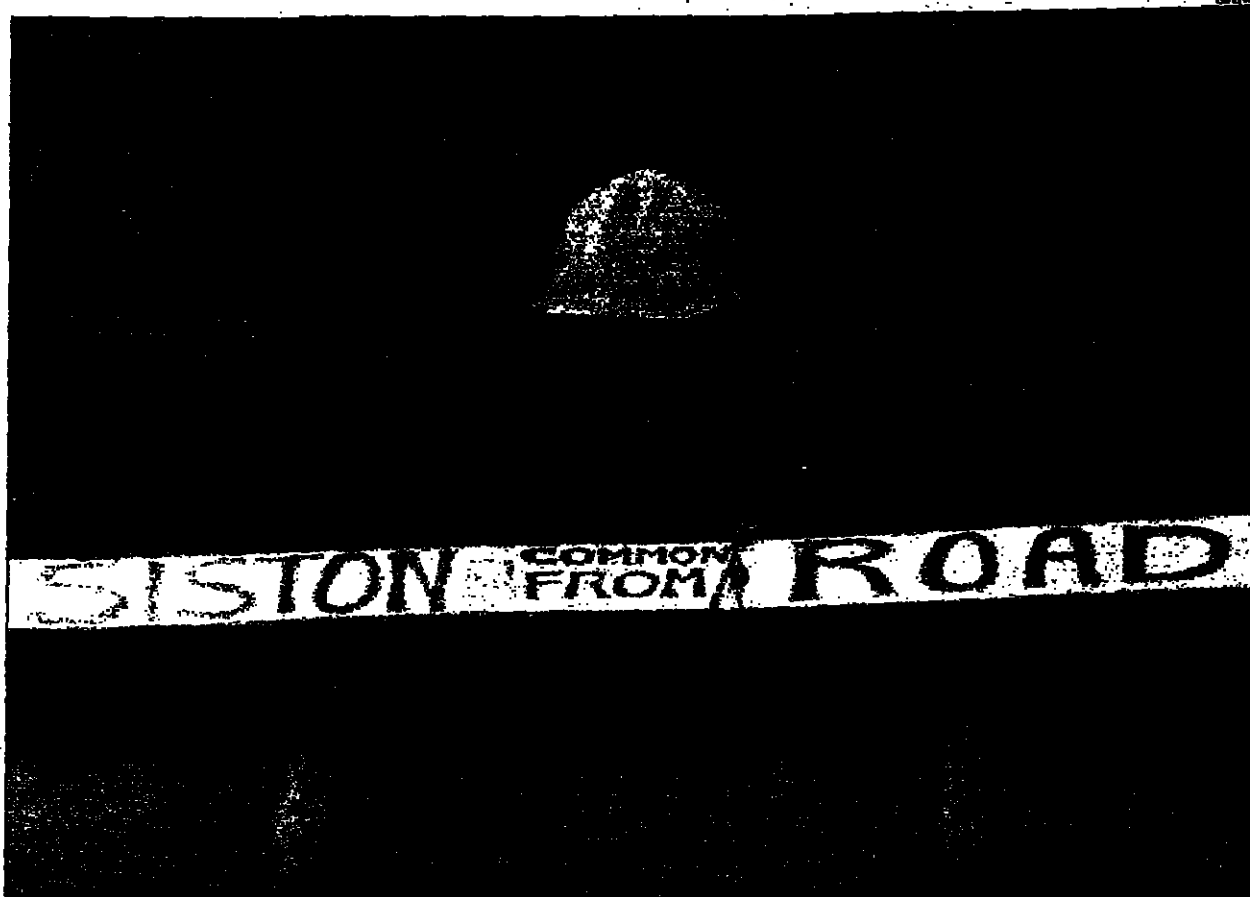
Eight protesters broke into the warehouse in Warrley, near Bristol, two weeks ago in an attempt to stop the Avon Ring Road scheme. Seven of them went out for provisions shortly afterwards and were unable to return after contractors blocked their path. Now Dr Jones remains alone behind the fencing and security guards, supplied through the wire by supporters.

The ring road stretches ten miles around the eastern fringes of the city. South Gloucestershire council had been due to start work on the final stretch in 1993, but two campaigners, Barry McNeeney and Andrew Nicolson, conducted a legal challenge that delayed it for five years. The cost of the

project rose by £3 million and the two men's £100,000 bill was met through legal aid. The House of Lords threw out their case last April and £4 million was allocated to keep protesters away from the construction site at Siston Common.

Dr Jones's stand has angered locals who want the bypass completed to keep traffic away from residential streets. On Sunday, residents turned up to protest at the delays.

John Hunt, a Labour councillor and spokesman on planning and transport, said: "I object to these self-appointed people [the campaigners] who try to impose their point of view on the masses. I know I speak for the vast majority of locals who have suffered years of misery with relentless traffic and noise. I could possibly understand if this was a new



Hard-headed: Margaret Jones, who has given up her university job to block the progress of the Avon Ring Road

road, but all we are trying to do is complete an existing one. They are not from around here and they do not have the support of local people."

Dr Jones says she has been an eco-warrior "in spirit" since

her home in Hertfordshire was demolished to make way for a road when she was 11. She taught in the United States before returning to Britain in 1992.

The council is now trying to

gain an eviction order through the courts. Dr Jones's involvement in "direct action" protests has landed her in court in the past, and she is becoming something of a legend among fellow protesters. Rowland

Dye, of Stop the Avon Ring Road, said: "Margaret is a remarkable woman and we all have tremendous respect for her." On Saturday they will attempt to smuggle in a birthday cake.

Boy found hanging after row over mess

By PAUL WILKINSON

A BOY was found hanging by his England football scarf soon after arguing with his parents about his messy bedroom.

Adam Firth, 12, went to his room after being told off for not tidying it by his mother Julie and father Rob. They later found him hanging from his bunk bed.

Adam was a pupil at Balby Carr school, Doncaster. A spokesman said that teachers had told the 1500 pupils of the death. "Adam was a model pupil, very tidy and well-mannered. There had been no indication that anything was wrong," the spokesman said.

Detective Inspector, Dick Venables, of South Yorkshire Police, said: "It would appear he had a minor dispute with his parents regarding the state of his bedroom. These are tragic circumstances and an inquest will be opened to look into what exactly happened." Mr and Mrs Firth, who are believed to have another son and a daughter, were too upset to comment.

Grieving isle advertises for young family

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Hebridean isle of Iona is advertising for a family to move there after a boating accident wiped out almost all its young men.

A house, described as having B&B potential and previously occupied by one of the four victims, has been advertised to let, but only families with young children have been asked to apply.

As is the case on most remote Scottish islands, Iona's population has been shrinking steadily over recent years but the accident in December has heightened the impact. The population stands at 102, of which 40 per cent are more than 60 years old.

There is one baby on the island and the primary school's four pupils are due to move in the summer to Oban High School on the mainland. Unless there is an influx of youngsters, islanders fear that the primary school may close.

Evelyn MacPhail, an Iona community councillor, said: "There are no other children of school age and if the school closed it would be another blow to the community."

"It would also make it more difficult to attract newcomers without a school. All those

who died in the boating accident may well have set up their own homes on the island and had families of their own. It is a very depressed island at the moment."

The four men were returning home from a Christmas dinner-dance on the island of Mull in the early hours of December 13 when their wooden dingy was swamped by a wave during the one-mile crossing.

They were Alisdair Dougall, 19, David Kirkpatrick, 23, both fishermen, Logie MacFadyen, 24, a farmer, and Robert Hay, 23, a tour boat operator. Their friend, Gordon Grant, 33, who also runs a tour boat, managed to swim ashore. The bodies were recovered earlier this month.

Gordon Grant senior, the father of the survivor, said: "There just aren't enough jobs on the island and housing is a problem. The only work we have is through tourism during the summer and many of the houses here are rented out as holiday homes."

A spokesman for Argyll and Bute District Council said the future of the school would be discussed at the next education committee meeting.

Euro vote hope for caged hens

By MICHAEL HORNSBY

UP TO eight million hens arrive at slaughterhouses every year in Britain with broken bones, it is claimed today.

The battery cages in which most egg-laying birds are reared make bones brittle because hens are denied exercise, according to Compassion in World Farming.

The publication of the report comes on the eve of a vote in the European Parliament on the future of battery cages. In Britain alone some 30 million hens, about 85 per cent of the flock, are kept in cages.

The report says that brittle bones due to osteoporosis are common in caged hens, with one study finding that all birds were osteoporotic after a year of confinement. Philip Lymbery, the charity's campaigns director, said: "We urge Europe's politicians to ensure that breakfast in the new millennium involves breaking a free-range egg."

European MPs will vote on a proposal to increase minimum floor space per bird from 450 sq cm (less than a side of A4 paper) to 800 sq cm.

CORRECTION

A report (Media, January 22) wrongly quoted Stuart Smith, who, together with Victoria Greetham, hosted Channel 4 into making a documentary about them, as saying "I get a high out of it, and it keeps me off drugs". In fact Mr Smith said "it's like being on a constant high but without drugs". The error, for which we apologise, arose from wrong information supplied by Channel 4.

Wild boars 'should be eradicated'

By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S wild boars should be eradicated because of the risk they pose to wildlife and public safety, conservation experts said yesterday.

The Game Conservancy Trust, which advises the Government on countryside issues, said there would be a growing risk of people being injured or killed if boars were left to breed unchecked. The trust also gave warning that the animals could damage crops, kill lambs and ground-nesting birds and pass on diseases to free-range pigs. Up to 300 wild boars are at large in Kent, East Sussex and Dorset after escaping from commercial farms. Each female can produce two litters of up to nine piglets each year.

The trust's recommendations came in response to a Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food consultation document published last year. Dr Stephen Tapper, who wrote the trust's *Wild Boar Consultation Report*, said yesterday: "It would be irresponsible to do nothing... These populations will increase and could get out of hand." He said that trained marksmen should be hired to eradicate the animals, and that tighter controls should be imposed on farms.

Keith Taylor, of the Wild Boar Association, supported the trust's call for eradication. A spokesman for the ministry said that the trust's report echoed recommendations made by the Central Science Laboratory, and that eradication was one option that ministers were studying.

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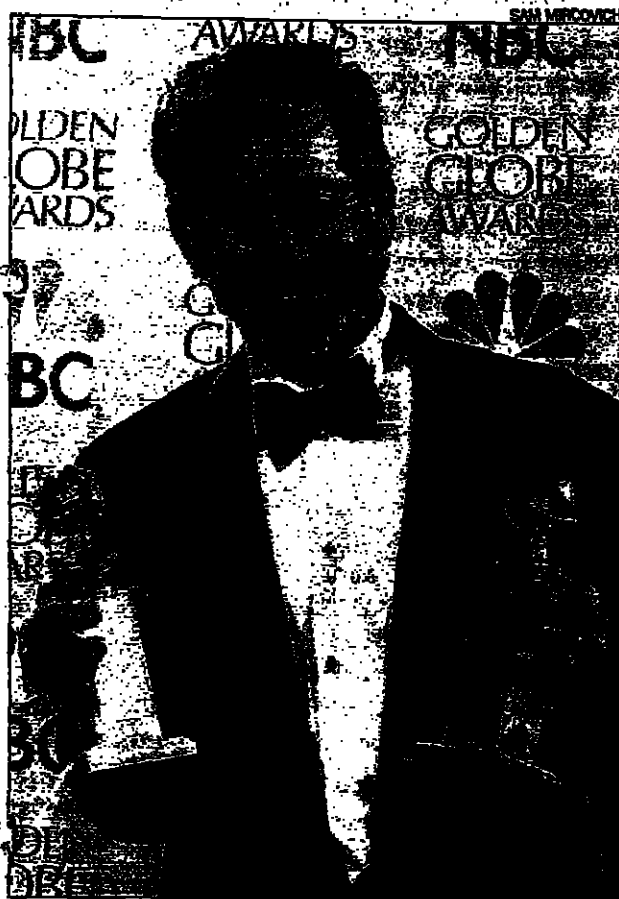
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Spielberg on top of the Globes

Steven Spielberg and his awards for *Saving Private Ryan*

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

STEVEN SPIELBERG paid tribute to D-Day veterans as *Saving Private Ryan*, judged to be the most realistic war film ever made, was voted best film and he best director at the Golden Globe awards.

Speaking at the Beverly Hills ceremony on Sunday night, he thanked the veterans who had "saved Western civilisation and stopped the Holocaust in 1945", and had made his film possible.

While Spielberg stole the show for America, Britain was far from outdone: Michael Caine, Sir Tom Stoppard and Lynn Redgrave were among those flying the flag.

Caine, 55, collected the award for best actor in a musical or comedy film for his performance as a sleazy nightclub agent in *Little Voice*.

In his acceptance speech he joked: "What a shock! My career must be slipping. This is the first time I've ever been available to pick up an award." His previous awards include an Oscar for best supporting actor in Woody Allen's 1986 film, *Hannah and Her Sisters*.

According to Stephen Woolley, executive producer of *Little Voice*, Caine waived his normal star-sized fee. "I'm really pleased for Michael. He worked so incredibly hard. He wasn't being paid a huge Hollywood salary. He just loved the screenplay."



Sean Connery and Michael Caine at a post-awards party

They had worked together on *Mona Lisa* when Caine had lowered his fee to work with Bob Hoskins. He had done so again because of the script and the chance to work with Brenda Blethyn and Jane Horrocks. His instinct had paid off, Mr Woolley said.

The combined writing talents of Sir Tom Stoppard and Marc Norman won the best screenplay award for *Shakespeare in Love*. The American actress Gwyneth Paltrow, who has become an honorary Briton after starring as British characters in both that film and in *Sliding Doors*, won best actress in a comedy film. She beat off competition from Jane Horrocks, who delivered near-perfect impersonations of Marilyn Monroe and Marlene Dietrich in *Little Voice*.

Lynn Redgrave won the best supporting actress award for *Gods and Monsters*, in which she plays a crusty but loving maid to an ageing horror film director. She said: "It's been 32 years since I stood one of these on a mantelpiece and it's been

crying out for a friend ever since."

Hopes of the award for best actress in a drama going to Britain's Emily Watson, Jacqueline du Pré in *Hilary and Jackie*, were dashed when it was awarded to the Australian Cate Blanchett for her performance in the title role of *Elizabeth*.

Another British hope, Stephen Fry, nominated for his portrayal of Oscar Wilde in *Wilde*, was beaten to the best dramatic actor award by Jim Carrey for *The Truman Show*. Carrey's co-star, Ed Harris, was named best supporting actor.

Jack Nicholson, who in the past has been nominated for 14 Golden Globes and has won five, received the Cecil B. DeMille Award for his "outstanding contribution to the entertainment field".

The awards, which are in their 56th year, are chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and are said to give a good indication as to who will win Oscars two months later. However, *Shakespeare in Love* could be limited to a best screenplay award as neither best comedy nor actress in a comedy feature in the Oscars. Michael Caine's category is also a non-starter.



Gwyneth Paltrow made an emotional acceptance speech

Sarwar's election fraud trial is delayed

By GILLIAN HARRIS
SCOTLAND
CORRESPONDENT

THE trial of Mohammad Sarwar, Britain's first Muslim MP, was adjourned yesterday after a procedural delay.

The MP for Glasgow Govan, who faces charges of electoral fraud and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, made no comment as he arrived at the High Court in Edinburgh with his wife, Perveen.

The trial, which will begin today before Lady Cosgrove, is expected to last at least six weeks. Witnesses listed to give evidence include the Agriculture Minister, Nick Brown, who as Labour's Chief Whip oversaw the Labour investigation into the allegations against Mr Sarwar which resulted in the MP being suspended from the party.

Alan Johnson, the Labour MP for Hull West, and Jack McConnell, the former general secretary of the Scottish Labour Party, are also expected to give evidence.

Mr Sarwar, 46, of Pollokshields, Glasgow, denies inducing by fraudulent means the electoral registration officer for Glasgow to add the names and addresses of four people to the Govan register in March 1997. He is also charged with breaching the 1983 Representation of the People Act by knowingly making a false declaration about his election expenses.

Mumtaz Hussain, of Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, appeared in court with Mr Sarwar yesterday. He faces one charge of attempting to pervert the course of justice.



Mr Sarwar yesterday: hearing was adjourned

NEWS IN BRIEF

Strike date for meat inspectors

Meat inspectors are to hold a 24-hour strike on February 2 in a dispute over pay and conditions that could disrupt supplies. Unison, their union, said yesterday that it had instructed nearly 1,000 of its members employed as inspectors by the Meat Hygiene Service to stay away from work on that day. Last week 352 inspectors voted for a strike, and 225 against, in a 57 per cent turnout after Unison rejected an imposed 4 per cent pay deal backdated to last April. The union said that inspectors should have received 4.7 per cent, the same as Ministry of Agriculture staff.

Diver suffocated

A post-mortem examination on Warrant Officer John Rann, 38, serving with the 1st Battalion The Light Infantry in Cyprus, showed that he ran out of air while searching for a lost flipper when diving off Laracna on Sunday.

Scouts found

Four girl Scouts lost in fog for 12 hours on a hike across the Sussex Downs kept up their spirits by singing. The girls, aged 13 and 14, were located in the early hours of yesterday by a helicopter equipped with a heat-sensitive camera.

Larkin's Way

The poet Philip Larkin has had a street named after him in Wellington, Shropshire, which he described as a "hole of toad's turds". He worked in the town's library in the 1940s, saying he "never felt anything but degraded" by the post.

Offer scotched

An offer by Go, the cut-price arm of British Airways, to give any passenger wearing a kilt a free Burns Night flight from Stansted to Edinburgh, flopped. Check-in staff wearing tartan caps had no takers for the 40 seats.

Traffic stopper

A road-safety campaigner has stopped drivers speeding past his home by erecting a poster of the model Eva Herzigova undressing in his front garden. "It worked like a treat as soon as I put it up," said Cyril Long, of Barham, Suffolk.

Gypsies turn road into racecourse

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

GYPSIES who blocked a two-mile stretch of dual carriageway to hold a trotting race were being sought by police yesterday.

About 60 travellers stopped traffic on the A303, near Yeovil, Somerset, at 8am on Sunday and unloaded ponies and traps from a small convoy of vans.

Several races took place before competitors and spectators fled down country lanes, pursued by police. "They drove off with their boot lids up so we could not get the registration numbers," a spokesman for Avon and Somerset

police said. Motorists inundated the police with calls on their mobile phones when they found the westbound carriageway blocked. The spectators were cheering and betting on traps racing between the Podimore roundabout and Ilchester bypass.

The police spokesman said that the departing spectators delayed traffic long enough to allow the riders and carts to escape and then made off through the village of Podimore.

No arrests were made and police investigations are continuing.

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I'm no monster, says Sainsbury

LORD SAINSBURY of Turville, the Minister for Science under attack over his links to research into genetically modified food, hit back at the Tories yesterday by calling them an "anti-business" party.

The Labour peer, who was until 1997 the chairman of the Sainsbury's chain of supermarkets, had been accused of funding experiments in food through a private charitable trust. He claimed the alleged "blatant conflict of interest" was impossible as his personal fortune — estimated at £2 billion — was controlled by a blind trust over whose decisions which he had no say.

The Tories had claimed that Lord Sainsbury had channelled money from the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, which the peer had set up in 1987, to the Sainsbury Laboratory in Norwich to experiment in genetically modified food. The foundation directs £20 million a year to worthy causes.

They also claimed that Lord Sainsbury's position on a Cabinet committee dealing with gene foods policy was a conflict of interest. Lord Sainsbury said: "What the Sainsbury Laboratory does is fundamental research into disease resistance in plants. It isn't re-

Mark Inglefield finds the minister accused over 'Frankenstein foods' ready to rebut the scaremongers

motely of value to Sainsbury's. That would conflict with charity law and a charity cannot personally benefit in any way a person who gives it money."

Lord Sainsbury, 59, would appear to be a very useful person to have in Government. Besides his business expertise, he is passionate about his brief — he even held his last wedding anniversary in the Science Museum — and he is reported to have given new Labour £3 million. But have the accusations that he is in a position to bene-

fit from pushing the Government into allowing "Frankenstein foods" on to supermarket shelves ever made him feel like throwing in the towel?

"I think it is rather a shame that the Tories are becoming an anti-business party"

"Not really," he says. "It's

possible area where it might come up is the Cabinet committee, which covers the whole of biotechnology. The committee has only met once and it didn't come up then." He still ap-

points the trustees of the Gatsby foundation, but has a small say in where the money goes. Lord Sainsbury joined the Labour Party after leaving Cambridge, but as the party drifted further to the left in the 1970s he saw the need for a radical rethink. He joined the SDP in the 1980s. After it merged with the Liberals he devoted his time to Sainsbury's, resurfacing when Tony Blair became Labour leader.

He insists he is no headway-on jumper. "I wrote a Fabian pamphlet in the late 1970s called *Government and Industry: a New Partnership* and basically that was new Labour before its time."

Were you or have you ever been a Socialist?

"Um, I've always been a member of the Labour Party," he says, again smiling.

Lord Sainsbury insists that he would stand aside if he ever felt there was a genuine conflict of interest. "I think it's very important that there aren't conflicts of interest in Government, but having said that I think it's very important that business people do come into politics," he says. He believes the Tories' point-scoring is further proof they are out of touch with modern commerce.



Lord Sainsbury: denied conflict of interest between research at the Sainsbury Laboratory and his role as Science Minister

"When we had Conservative businessmen in government I think the Labour Party accepted the conventions about blind trusts and those sort of issues," he says, "so it's really rather a

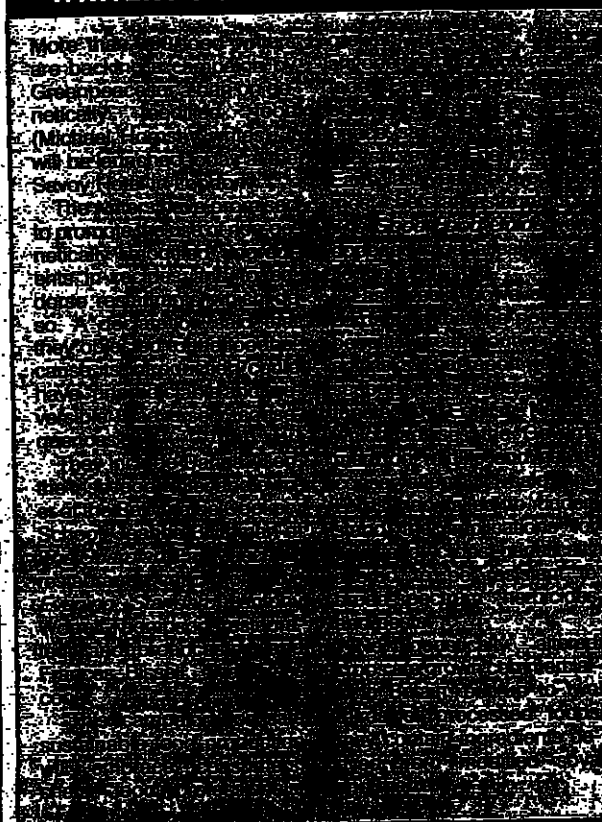
shame that they are becoming an anti-business party."

Lord Sainsbury is also keen to point out that his shareholding has been handled correctly. "All my Sainsbury shares

are in a blind trust," he says. On genetic modification of vegetables, or as the tabloids put it, "Frankenstein's 'frut'", he says: "I don't think headlines about Frankenstein tomatoes

really contribute much. There is a serious debate to be had about biodiversity and safety and the more the debate can be kept on those issues the better it will be, I think."

WRITERS PUT NAMES TO CAMPAIGN



Unfair sniping has become a dirty business

Any businessman considering becoming a minister must be having second thoughts. Each of the industrialists who has become a minister has had his business affairs subject to minute, even obsessive, examination and criticism. This goes well beyond maintaining proper standards and raises questions about the type of people we want in politics and government.

Immediately after the election, Lord Simon of Highbury, the former chairman of BP, was criticised over his shares in the company. Then came the long-tunnelling Geoffrey Robinson saga over his offshore trusts and complex business interests. Last summer, the appointment of Lord Macdonald of Tradeston as a Scottish Office minister caused a stir because of his previous position as chairman of Scottish Media Group. This month, Michael Wills, the new small business minister, has been criticised over his television production company, while Lord Sainsbury of Turville has been accused of a conflict of interest between his role as Minister for Science and the holdings in the family supermarket chain.

There is no evidence that any of these ministers abused their position in office. The criticisms of Lord Simon and Mr Wills are based on misunderstandings of the business world. The former was legally constrained about when he could sell his BP shares because of the inside information he had as a recent chairman, while it has taken time for Mr Wills as founder and predominant owner of his company to complete the legal steps to divest himself of his interests. Whatever else may be said about Mr Robinson, there is no evidence he did anything to benefit himself financially. He resigned because his value as a minister had been eroded by cumulative attrition. The odd point has

been the attitude of the Tories. Their desire to get their own back after the over-the-top attacks from Labour before the election is understandable, but short-sighted. Their criticisms of Lord Simon and Lord Sainsbury have struck many in the City and industry as irresponsible and have done nothing for the party's standing with business.

The various Tory businessmen who became ministers followed similar procedures, using blind trusts and standing aside from possible conflicts of interest. Instead of acting like hyperactive investigative journalists, the Tories should be seeking to strengthen procedures to avoid such charges.

The present system is too formal and depends on varying departmental interpretations. As I have argued before, what is needed is an ethics commissioner or office to advise on potential conflicts of interest for ministers, as the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards already does for MPs. The Government is looking to the forthcoming inquiry by the Neill Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The underlying question is whether we want business people to come into politics, which as Lord Sainsbury rightly argues is very important. Businessmen have often struggled to make a mark at the very top, but they have contributed at the medium level, as Lord Simon and Lord Sainsbury now are, by providing private sector insights and a bridge to industry.

The danger is that, otherwise, we will be stuck with more and more full-time career politicians with no outside experience. That is in no one's interests, as Tory spokesmen would discover from talking to Archie Norman, their party's chief executive who, head of Asda, was one of Lord Sainsbury's fiercest rivals.



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Reclusive artist kept himself out of the picture

Dalya Alberge on legacy of man convinced of his greatness

TWO houses overflowing with paintings have been left by a reclusive artist who refused to sell his work during his 90-year life.

Theodore Major — who, like his friend L.S. Lowry, was inspired by the industrial landscapes of northern England — repeatedly turned down offers for his work from public and private collectors.

Fearful that his art would not be properly appreciated, he hoarded about 3,000 canvases. It was said that he bought a second house just to store his paintings, which lined the walls from floor to ceiling.

"He painted because of an obsession and he was very protective towards his work," said Michael Leber of Salford Art Gallery, which owns one of his works, *Pit at Wigan*. "I think he developed a healthy suspi-

cion of the art establishment in general, although, as a teacher of art, he was part of it."

The artist, he explained, feared that his work would suffer the indignity of being relegated to a darkened museum storeroom. The thought was too much to bear, particularly as Major was an artist convinced of his own greatness. He campaigned unsuccessfully for a gallery in Wigan devoted to his art.

The future of his personal collection was unclear yesterday, although dealers from London were believed to be interested. The decision depends on his daughter and his will.

Mary Major, a teacher and artist, said that some of her father's works were likely to be sold to support a charitable trust fund. She said she understood his refusal to part with the paintings. "He was entirely devoted to his works," she said. "They were almost like his children. He had a vision of art. It was more of a religion than a money-making business."

Mr Leber said that Major deserved his own gallery: "Some of his work is a major contribution to 20th-century British art. He did a number of works based on the Wigan area which are about death and decay. The figures are almost skeletons."

The artist was described as "an egocentric old chap" by Lawrence Ives, a collector who was also a friend of Lowry. He said yesterday: "Theo also

made the frames for his work. He used to call it putting them in their coffins."

Mr Ives recalled when Major allowed his work to be exhibited in Bolton in the late 1960s: "Lowry and Theo set off to tour the exhibition, which had about 30 or 40 pictures. I followed them. They walked around in complete silence. It was very funny. I was expecting great pearls of wisdom."

"They got to a corner and sat on some steps. There was a long pause. Lowry said, 'As you get older, it don't get any easier, Theo'. There was a long pause. Theo said, 'That it don't, that it don't'. And that was the sole comment on this exhibition ... Lowry would never have made a personal remark about a fellow artist."

Around the galleries, page 35



Rooms with a view: Theodore Major filled two homes with his paintings, which his daughter said were almost like children to him



Lowry: few words on friend's exhibition

Art thieves 'had a shopping list'

By PAUL WILKINSON

ARMED robbers who stole paintings worth £2 million from York City Art Gallery ignored works at least as valuable, police said yesterday.

Detectives believe the two thieves, who called each other Bert and Tony, were working to a "shopping list" put together by underworld art experts.

Among the paintings they passed over during the raid on Friday evening were two by L.S. Lowry which together were as valuable as the £500,000 Turner they did take.

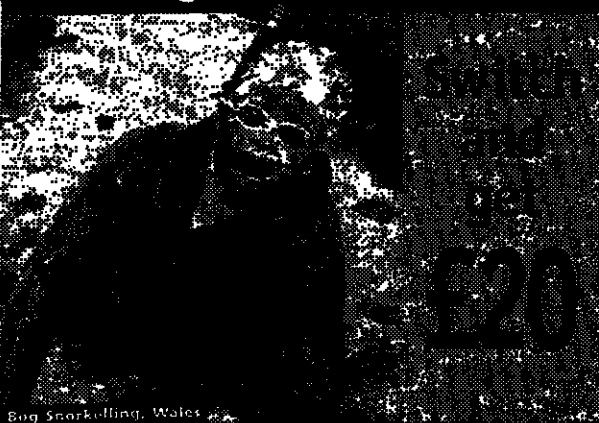
The watercolour, a view

of Rievaulx Abbey in the early 1820s, was one of 20 paintings and decorated wood panels stolen.

A spokesman for North Yorkshire police said: "It seems the thieves were following orders and were not art lovers or collectors themselves. One other theory is that they were after just one good picture, maybe the Turner, and decided to add a few more to their collection just for good luck."

Art dealers have been asked to keep a look-out for the stolen works and a catalogue has been circulated to other police forces.

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Iraqis claim civilians died in air attack

By MICHAEL THEODOULOU
IN NICOSIA

IRAQI accused American and British military aircraft of firing missiles into residential areas in the southern port city of Basra yesterday. The Iraqis also claimed that several civilians, including women and children, were killed and wounded in the attack.

Britain denied any involvement. Washington confirmed that its warplanes had been in action over the southern no-fly zone after an Iraqi incursion, but said they had attacked air defence systems north of Basra. American aircraft later attacked three separate anti-aircraft facilities in the northern no-fly zone after they were tracked by ground radar and came under fire by surface-to-air missiles.

There have been numerous clashes since Iraq declared that it would challenge British and US warplanes in its skies after Operation Desert Fox in December, but yesterday's incidents appeared to mark a serious escalation. Iraq has admitted boosting air defenses in the south in the hope of hitting allied aircraft.

A producer for the American television network CNN saw 12 houses destroyed in a poor residential area of Basra. Local officials said 11 people had been killed in the "indis-



criminate and savage" attack. Basra airport and an oilfield had also been hit, they said.

In the initial confusion it was unclear whether stray missiles were to blame. Washington said two bombs landed outside their target areas but had no reason to believe they were responsible for civilian casualties. Baghdad's critics in the past have accused Iraqi gunners of shielding behind the civilian population.

The incidents in the no-fly zones, established in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War to protect the Kurdish and Shia communities, came as an isolated Iraq fulminated against the Arab League's decision to issue a resolution critical of Baghdad. Furious state-run Iraqi newspapers said it had provided cover for more American and British attacks instead of condemning last month's Operation Desert Fox.

Tension in the Gulf is expect-

ed to mount further today when Iraq's rubber-stamp parliament meets in special session to discuss the issue of Kuwait. The session follows calls from prominent deputies for the Government to withdraw Iraq's 1994 recognition of the tiny emirate because sanctions have not been lifted.

"We could be back to 1990," said one Gulf Arab envoy. "Iraq's attitude is that it has honoured its commitments but the Security Council is refusing to do its job."

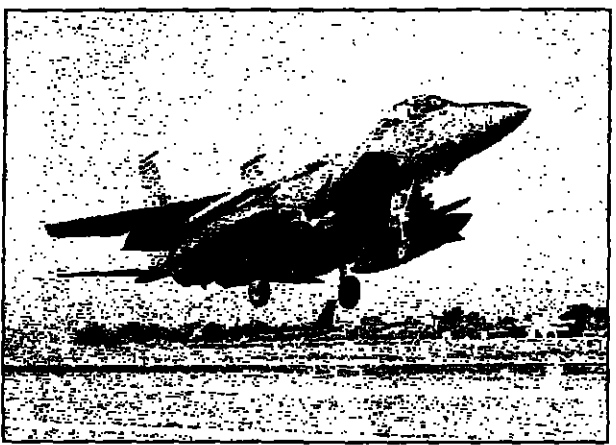
President Saddam Hussein accused Kuwait and Saudi Arabia at the weekend of glutting world oil markets to the detriment of other Arab states and the benefit of the Americans. The two countries had handed "America and Zionism knives to pierce Arab nations with," he said. His remarks echoed Iraq's complaints against Kuwait before the 1990 invasion.

The Iraqi delegation walked out of the stormy Arab League talks in Cairo on Sunday when foreign ministers demanded that Baghdad renounce "provocations" against its neighbours and comply with United Nations resolutions before economic sanctions could be lifted.

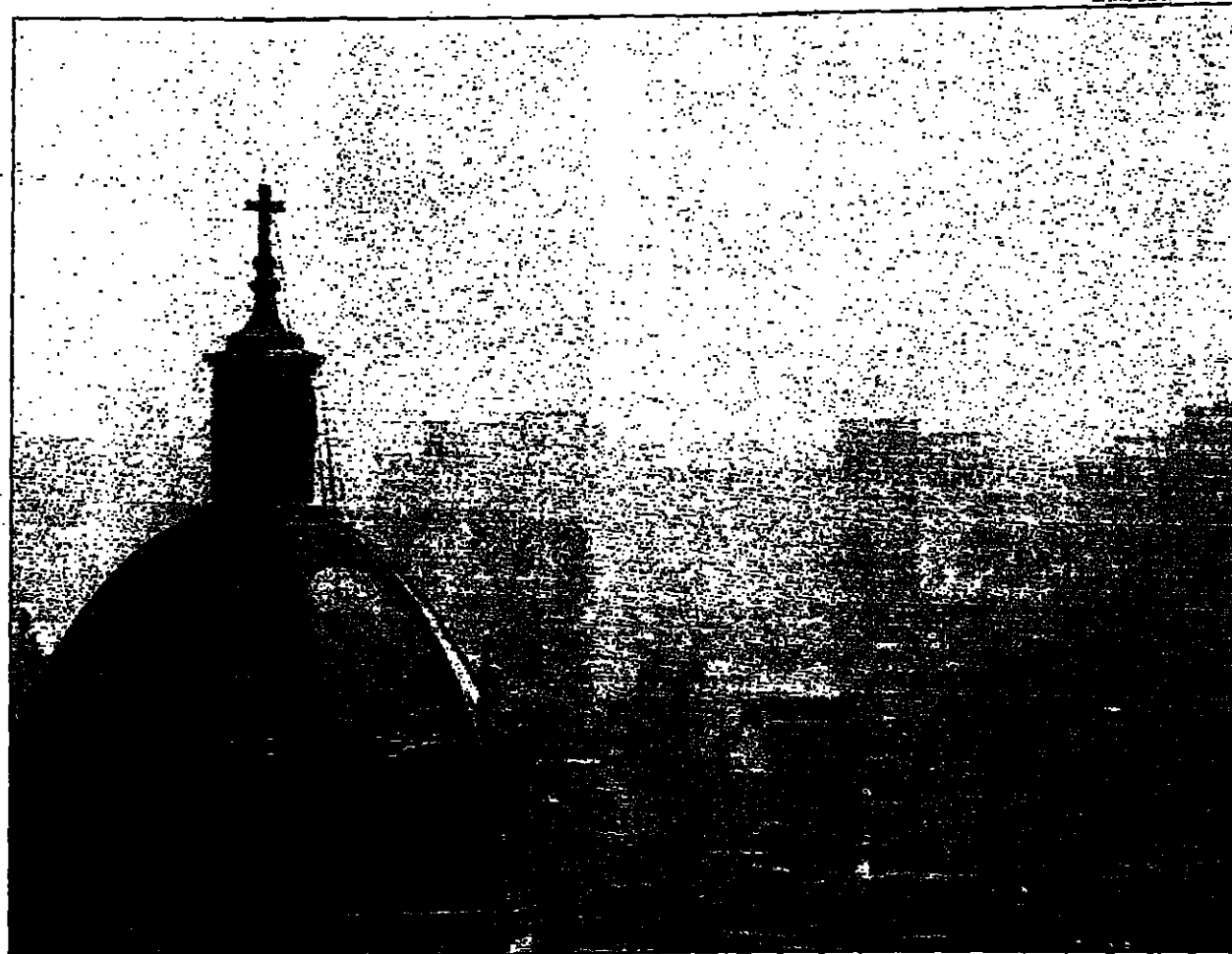
The foreign ministers made clear their sympathy for the Iraqi people, but offered none to Saddam's regime. They expressed "sorrow and displeasure" over the military option against Iraq but offered no explicit condemnation of the four-day attacks in December. Baghdad had demanded that Arab League members bypass the UN and lift sanctions.

Muhammad Said al-Sahaf, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, blamed Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria for the tone of the resolution, which newspapers said was drawn up "in advance by the Americans".

"Instead of condemning the US and British aggression against Iraq, these plotters, these corrupt parties and hypocrites blamed Iraq and put the responsibility on it," commented al-Jumhuriya.



An American F15E Strike Eagle, one of the aircraft involved in clashes over the no-fly zones of Iraq



A curtain of smog envelops Mexico City — top of the dirty-air league when sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide are included in the cocktail of total atmospheric pollution, according to the World Resources Institute

Stressed-out rats shed light on how humans fall ill

FROM NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR
IN ANAHEIM

TWO strains of rats, one calm and the other jumpy, are throwing new light on human diseases.

Although almost identical in other respects, the two strains tend to suffer different diseases. The calm rats develop rheumatoid arthritis, allergic skin diseases, asthma and the rodent equivalent of multiple sclerosis. The nervous rats are far more prone to colds and influenza.

The difference, said Dr Esther Sternberg of the US National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland, lies in how rats respond to stress and the effect it has on their immune systems. Applied to humans, it may help to explain the occasional effectiveness of alternative medicine, or why some people in medical trials get better even when given sugar pills.

The calm rats, which Dr Sternberg compared to laid-back Californians, respond to stress by pumping out low levels of the stress hormones. One role of these hormones is to control the immune response, the body's mechanism for fighting off infections. If too little is produced, the immune response "remains turned up, and may actually damage the body by turning against it, in the autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and MS."

The jumpy rats, which she compared to New Yorkers, have the opposite problem. They produce too much stress hormone, which turns down the immune response so far that they make themselves vulnerable to ordinary infections.

The tight links between mood and disease were discussed on Sunday at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Anaheim, California.

A WOMAN who laughs uncontrollably when pricked with a needle has illuminated the nature of jokes.

She suffers a particular kind of brain damage which makes a painful experience seem funny, a neurologist from the Centre for Brain and Cognition at the University of California at San Diego told the conference on Sunday.

Dr V.S. Ramachandran

said that jokes provoke laughter because they are nature's false alarm system. "A typical joke takes the listener along a path of expectation, then at the end throws in a punchline which involves a complete re-interpretation of everything that has gone before," he said.

"It is the violation of expectations that makes jokes funny. The reason we laugh is to alert other people that it is a false alarm — what has happened is not a serious threat."

As an example, he cited the traditional slapstick joke of a fat, self-important man slipping on a banana skin. This is funny if he merely loses his

dignity, but if he cracks his skull open on the pavement and bleeds it is not funny. Dr Ramachandran said.

In the case of his patient, who laughed when pricked with a needle, the brain damage lay in the links between the place in the brain where the pain is perceived and the place where that perception is processed in the emotional centres of the brain. "One part of the brain said pain, but the other said it's no big deal. So she laughs," he said.

CHILDREN in the major cities of China and India breathe air so full of pollutant particles that it is equivalent to smoking 40 cigarettes a day, a leading environmentalist claimed yesterday.

Dr Devra Lee Davis of the World Resources Institute, a Washington-based think-tank, said explosive growth of traffic and industry has led to pollution levels far greater than World Health Organisation guidelines.

Of the top ten dirtiest cities, measured by total amounts of particulate matter in the air, nine are in China and one, Rajkot, in India, she said.

When sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide are included, a different picture emerges. Making allowance for the number of children under five living in each city produces a league table in which Mexico City is top, followed by Beijing, Shanghai, Tehran, Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Tianjin, Manila and São Paulo.

Even the OSCE chairman, Knut Vollebæk, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, seems to have distanced himself slightly, saying Mr Walker "reacted emotionally" in the massacre village and that "it would have been cynical and inhuman if he hadn't".

Family of five shot dead in Kosovo hamlet

FROM TOM WALKER
IN BELGRADE

BRITISH monitors in Kosovo yesterday alerted the Serbian police to the deaths of five ethnic Albanians, whose bodies were found shot and burnt on a tractor and its trailer in an area the local authorities said was controlled by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

A retired British Army brigadier, Ian Macleod, brought six teams of international monitors to see the bodies in the hamlet of Rakovina, on the road leading from the western town of Djakovica towards Kлина.

Sources close to the monitors said the victims were shot with a heavy machinegun on Sunday before their tractor and trailer, laden with corn, caught fire. Two of the dead were children; all were said to be from the same family. There was no confirmation on whether they were refugees.

The monitors helped to escort a Serb investigating magistrate to the scene, near the so-called "Ho Chi Minh" trail constructed by the KLA to transport supplies between its central Drenica and western Decane zones of control. The Serb media centre in Pristina claimed there had been no police patrols anywhere near the area for several days.

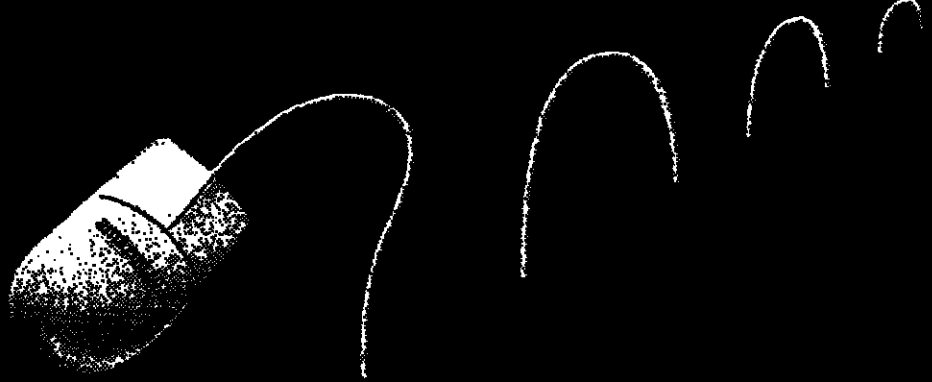
The incident is the worst in Kosovo since the Racak massacre that claimed 45 Albanian lives ten days ago.

The American envoy, Christopher Hill, met the ethnic Albanian leader, Ibrahim Rugova, in Pristina yesterday to "run through Contact Group thinking", according to an aide to Mr Hill. There are persistent rumours of a conference in Vienna at which Mr Rugova and political representatives of the KLA would try to find a common voice and an agenda falling short of outright independence.

A spokeswoman for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), meanwhile, dismissed as "absolute rubbish" reports that the senior international monitor, William Walker, might take an extended period of leave from his duties in Kosovo. Mr Walker is still being denounced by senior figures in the Serbian and Yugoslav Governments, who maintain that he should be expelled from Yugoslavia for his comments on Racak.

Even the OSCE chairman, Knut Vollebæk, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, seems to have distanced himself slightly, saying Mr Walker "reacted emotionally" in the massacre village and that "it would have been cynical and inhuman if he hadn't".

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'Miracle' as boy survives -50C flight

Paris: Doctors have hailed as a miracle the survival of an adolescent boy who hid in the undercarriage of an aircraft on a flight from Senegal to France (Ben Macintyre writes).

They say that he should have died of cold or suffocation. The boy, who claims to be aged 15 and has not been identified because he is a minor, spent five hours huddled near a wheel in the undercarriage as the aircraft reached an altitude of more than 30,000ft and the temperature dropped to -50C (-58F).

He was discovered, suffering from advanced hypothermia, after the Air Africa Airbus from Dakar landed at Lyons airport a week ago. The boy is now believed to be out of danger.

The Times and
The Royal Institution

Scientists for the new century

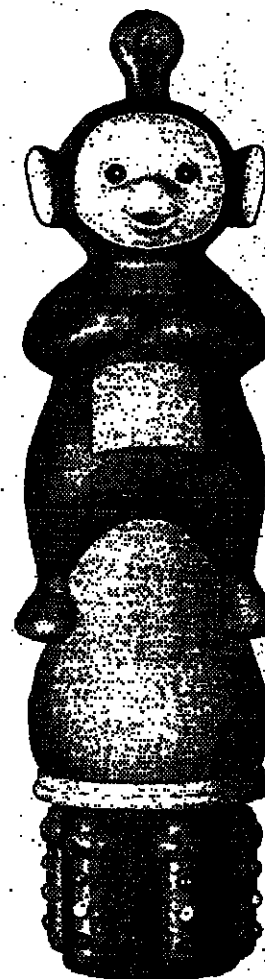
IN THE first of a new series of lectures starting tomorrow, Dr Martin Westwell, a chemist from Oxford University, will describe the rise of the superbug. For the first time, modern medicine has no antibiotics with which to fight the most deadly bacteria.

The lecture will be held at 7.30pm at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London, W1X 4BS. For tickets (£5/£3) please call 01753 670 2985. Tickets will be held for collection at the venue on the night.

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WOOLWORTHS

Down-to-earth blonde who won royal heart

By Christopher Walker

KING Hussein of Jordan's decision to reappoint his eldest son, Prince Abdullah, as heir has propelled back to the limelight one of the most unlikely and unassuming Englishwomen ever to play a major role in Middle East affairs.

When Toni Gardiner, then 19, became the King's second wife in 1961 it appeared like a fairytale romance for the blonde, down-to-earth girl who had met her husband-to-be when a young RAF officer took her Scottish dancing at the King's house at Shuneh, beside the Dead Sea.

The daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Walker Gardiner, an officer who had stayed in Jordan after the British Training Mission was broken up in 1959, Ms Gardiner became a Muslim, a Jordanian citizen and took the name Muna al-Hussein (Hussein's Delight).

The King's first wife had been the Cambridge-educated Queen Dina. But with Ms Gardiner he seemed to have found the ideal partner, although some leading Jordanians had reservations about the offspring of a converted Muslim and English-born woman ever succeeding to the Hashemite throne.

"Toni was a vivacious outdoors girl with simple tastes and no intellectual pretensions," wrote Roland Dallas, the King's biographer. "She was pretty, charming and the same height as the King."

"Like Hussein, she enjoyed riding, swimming, dancing and parties... She could not drive, and Hussein took delight in teaching her. They went go-karting together."

The King wrote in his autobiography: "For the first time in my life, here was a girl who took an interest in me as a human being and not a King." The marriage lasted until 1972, during which time the Princess (she did not wish to be called Queen) bore the King four children, two boys and two girls, of which the eldest was Abdullah, born on January 30, 1962.

He was briefly created Crown Prince until King Hussein, unnerved by several assassination attempts, altered the succession in favour of his

brother, Prince Hassan, 51, who was unceremoniously stripped of the role last week.

Despite a divorce soon after the King's eye lighted on Alia Toukan, a beautiful member of a Palestinian family with deep roots in the West Bank city of Nablus (who, as Queen Alia, was to be killed in a helicopter crash), Muna has remained a respected figure.

"She behaved with great dignity, turning down many other proposals of marriage and never speaking out bitterly about the divorce," a senior Palestinian journalist said yesterday. "She moved abroad, but has been back to Amman many times for family events like the birth of grandchildren, and remains one of the most-liked members of the Royal Family."

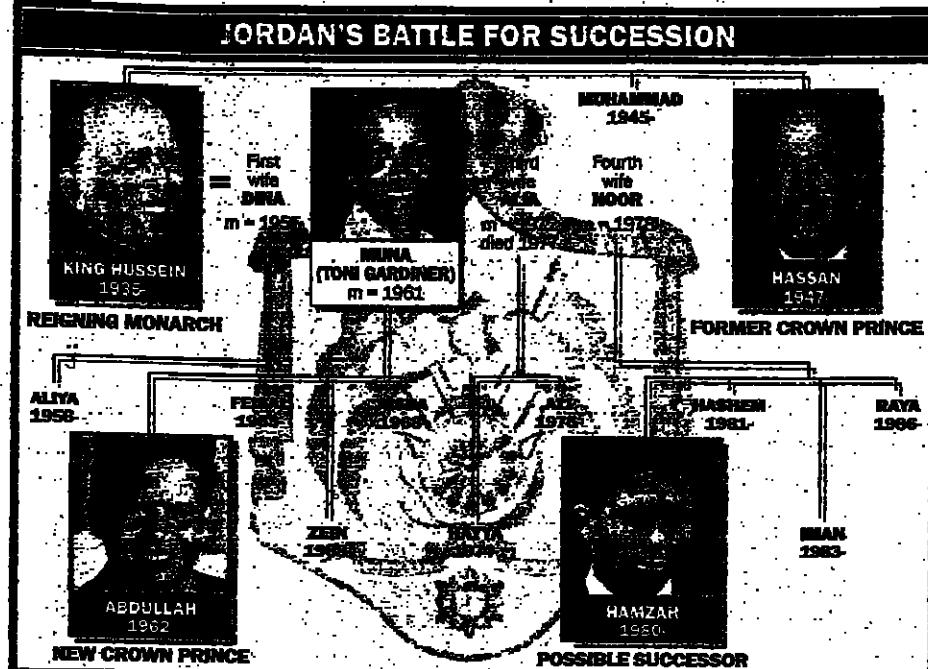
British diplomats are cock-a-hoop that the King has set

'She behaved with great dignity, never speaking bitterly of the divorce'

led for an heir with English roots rather than his favourite son, Prince Hamzah, 19, the eldest son of his fourth and present marriage to the American-born Queen Noor.

"There is no doubt that the Americans were plumping for Hamzah, hoping their influence on Jordan's future would rise proportionately," said a prominent Amman banker. Palace sources said that the King had eventually alighted on Abdullah because of his senior army role and his realisation of the bitterness — and possible violence — that the irregular promotion of Hamzah would provoke.

Abdullah has strong support in the tribally dominated armed forces and strong links with the Palestinians, who make up over 60 per cent of Jordan's population, via his wife Rania, from the West Bank town of Tulkarm.



Hussein plays safe by opting for eldest son

KING HUSSEIN of Jordan has ended days of speculation and confirmed by royal decree that his eldest son, Prince Abdullah, 36, is his heir in place of the King's 51-year-old brother, Prince Hassan, who had held the position of Crown Prince for 34 years.

The decree was signed on Sunday night after a spate of rumours that under the influence of his American-born fourth and current wife, Queen Noor, the King might have passed the succession to their son, Prince Hamzah, who is still a teenager.

Many senior Jordanian politicians had given a warning that such a move could provoke unrest. Toujan Faisal, Jordan's only woman MP until her defeat in last year's election, said: "Hamzah would have suffered the same fate as Faisal [Hussein's cousin, murdered when King of Iraq in 1958] because the people would have seen his promotion as blatantly unfair and a sign that behind the scenes the Americans were trying to run our country."

Mrs Faisal, who sat as an opposition independent in the lower house of Parliament, added: "After the plan was floated, the King saw it would be too risky to take the Hamzah option. Instead he opted for the much safer move of switching the succession back to Abdullah. But there are still many Jordanians who resent the way that Hassan has been dealt with."

Some officials said that Prince Hassan had taken the news "like a soldier" and immediately backed the move,

King's decision strengthens the English link, Christopher Walker writes

while others claimed he had sought permission to take a holiday abroad and was seriously considering leaving the country. Most senior aides dismissed this suggestion.

The reappointment of Prince Abdullah to the role he held briefly in the early 1960s as a toddler has revived traditional British influence in Jordan. His English-born mother, Princess Muna (née Toni Gardiner), is an occasional visitor to Amman, and the Prince himself served happily for a time in the British Army in Britain and West Germany. As both Princes — Abdullah and Hamzah — had foreign-born mothers who converted to Islam, the "Crown Prince's" background was described in royal

circles as no longer seen as a bar to his succession to the throne that Hussein took over 47 years ago at the age of 17.

Senior politicians said that the King's encounter with his own mortality during his second major cancer scare in only seven years had prompted him to move quickly to restore the Hashemite monarchy's succession to a son who would carry on his own legacy.

For months, Amman had been plagued with rumours about different sons being favoured, speculation that was fuelled when the King was perceived as taking an action or expressing a sentiment in support of one or other of them.

Palace sources said the King had wavered briefly before signing the historic decree replacing his younger, Oxford-educated brother who had been his close confidant and had repeatedly acted as regent since his appointment in 1965, a time when the King feared early death from assassination and an end to the Hashemite line.

Last night politicians said that he was concerned that, despite perceived blunders during the past six months, his brother should be given a graceful dismissal to ensure that his removal did not cause future dissent in the family ranks. They claimed that the monarch, who has a reputation of acting magnanimously towards even his bitterest political enemies, might be planning to appoint him as his deputy in economic areas and the Middle East peace process — areas to which Prince Hassan has devoted his working life.



The chosen one: Top, Prince Abdullah and brother Faisal with Muna, their mother; left, the Prince's parents on their wedding day in 1961; right, the Prince on parade

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Mercenaries' rage kindled by atrocities

AS Sierra Leone's rebels continue to murder priests and missionaries, and amputate the limbs of civilians left to their mercy, battle-hardened mercenaries are vowing their willingness to "do the job for nothing" — just to finish the rebels.

Fred Marafono MBE, a former warrant officer with the SAS, is now a mercenary for the Government. Aged 58 and a veteran of British campaigns in Oman, Borneo and Northern Ireland and scores of covert operations which took him from Mexico to South Africa, Mr Marafono should have hung up his gun years ago.

He is of Fijian origin, and on retiring from the SAS after 28 years said he could not face "just sitting about". He joined Executive Outcomes, a South African company offering mercenary services, to fight for the Sierra Leone Government against Revolutionary United Front rebels in 1994.

Often unpaid, their lives at risk, the men of Executive Outcomes lost their contracts with the election of President Kabbah. But Mr Marafono stayed on, contracted directly to Ecomog, the Nigerian-led West African peacekeeping force fight-

Sierra Leone's rebels violate even the rough code of African conflicts, writes Sam Kiley

ing the rebels. Ecomog officers admit that they would have lost Freetown last month without Mr Marafono and his comrades — "Juba" Joubert and Neil Ellis, both South Africans, and their Ethiopian engineer, Sindaba. They are the crew of "Bokkie", a Mil17 helicopter flying seven hours a day to resupply soldiers and give support from the air against anti-aircraft guns used to terrifying effect on West African infantry.

"Without these guys, we would have run out of food and ammo and fled the front. They are amazingly brave. I know they do it for money, but I wouldn't do it for anything," said a Nigerian lieutenant-colonel, himself a veteran.

As a crew, providing the services of Bokkie, they earn

about \$2,000 (£1,235) an hour when the money is paid. At the moment, the Bokkie crew are owed for seven months' flying. But memories of recent scenes at Freetown's Connaught Hospital, and the cold-blooded murder of Catholic priests and nuns by the rebels, keep them here. Killers themselves, they have no qualms about dispatching hundreds of their enemies in a hail of fire.

"I love it, it's fantastic," Mr Ellis said about letting loose a "brief burst" from Bokkie's machineguns. He is a veteran of the apartheid-era South African special forces. But the atrocities in Sierra Leone have also brought out the humanity behind the armoured shells of these soldiers of fortune.

"There is nothing in the world that can justify what is happening here. There is no way we can give up on these people. They are my people now. I am one with them," Mr Marafono said.

Jean-Jacques Fuentes, a former pilot with the French special forces, and "Matthieu", his co-pilot, who fly reconnaissance missions for Ecomog, have also clearly been horrified by what they have seen in Sierra Leone.

They recently met Lamen Jusa Jaka, a teacher, who sat on the floor in a corridor of the Connaught Hospital, pointing the bloody stumps of what used to be his hands at the heavens.

"I begged them not to do it. I begged them," Mr Jaka said. "But I knew it was no use. I just looked to the sky when they brought the axe down on my wrists. They seemed to be enjoying themselves."

Someone dropped some drugs into a pocket he will never be able to use again and told him to go home.

"Home? Home? Where is home? It is a pile of ashes. I have nothing. I cannot ever scratch myself again, or blow



A girl whose hands have been cut off waits for treatment at Freetown's Connaught hospital, which has been filled with patients mutilated by Sierra Leone's rebels

my nose, write, dig — I am finished." He shuffled off, carrying his arms at right angles to the ground.

M Fuentes said: "I can't take any more of this. I really can't. After this job, I'm going to quit. I promise." Himself a veteran who has fought for Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire and Denis Sassou-Nguesso in Congo-Brazzaville, he added: "I don't like it one bit — being made to feel human again because

some child has had her hands chopped off."

Journalists seized: Two European journalists were abducted yesterday by Sierra Leone rebels, who later told one of them to deliver a demand to the authorities.

Patrick Saint Paul of the Paris daily, *Le Figaro*, told reporters that he and Javier Espinosa, of the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*, were seized at Rukupa, near Wellington, an

eastern suburb of the capital, Freetown.

The rebels headed with the two into the nearby bush where they later released M Saint Paul. The Frenchman said the rebels had ordered him to pass on their demand for negotiations with the Nigerian-led Ecomog forces.

They said they would not release Señor Espinosa until their demand was broadcast on radio. (Reuters)

WORLD IN BRIEF

More Christians attacked in India

Lucknow: Officials in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh said yesterday that five Christian missionaries were beaten up, a day after an Australian missionary and his two sons were burnt alive by a mob of Hindu zealots. The latest victims of a rash of attacks on the country's minority Christian community occurred on the banks of the River Ganges in Allahabad.

N. Ravi Shankar, the state's Home Secretary, said the five Christians belonged to a missionary organisation called "Faith in Jesus" from Kerala state, where 23 per cent of the population is Christian. The victims were said to have been handing out pamphlets. (Reuters) Leading article, page 19

Ice fishermen safe

Moscow: Nearly 400 fishermen stranded on ice-floes and swept out to sea off the island of Sakhalin in Russia's Far East returned to land safely. The floes broke away from the coast and drifted for about an hour before the current pulled them back towards the shoreline at Cape Lesnoy, Moscow's Echo Radio reported. Ice fishing, on frozen lakes or rivers, is a winter tradition in Russia; drawing dozens and sometimes hundreds of fishermen to holes drilled in the ice. (AFP)

BA man escapes trial

Fairfax, Virginia: A British Airways flight attendant avoided a trial here by pleading no contest (admitting but not denying guilt) to assault and battery charges in a colleague's alleged rape. Julian Henry, 47, of Pulborough, West Sussex, was fined \$1,000 (£600) for the attack in a hotel room. The prosecutor dropped rape and sexual assault charges in exchange for the plea. The victim, 45, alleged that Henry raped her after several hours' drinking at the hotel. (AP)

Stolen Uccello found

Chambéry: Police officers patrolling a parking lot in Aix-les-Bains, southeast France, stumbled on a stolen painting by the Renaissance Florentine artist Paolo Uccello. The 15th-century oil portrait of *Unknown Man*, stolen from the Chambéry Museum this month, was found propped up against a bush on Sunday. The museum curator said the thieves were probably unorganised and became scared. (AFP)

Nuclear verdict delayed

Bonn: Germany's plan to abandon nuclear power hit a snag when the Government announced it had put off a controversial decision on banning exports of spent nuclear fuel. Gerhard Schröder, the Chancellor, right, was concerned that Germany would have to pay compensation if it scrapped reprocessing deals with French and British plants, a government spokesman said. About one third of German electricity is supplied by nuclear power. (AP)



Newspaper chief freed

Harare: Police yesterday released Clive Wilson, the proprietor of *The Standard*, after detaining him for three days over the newspaper's report of an alleged conspiracy to overthrow President Mugabe (Ian Raath writes). Mr Wilson, 62, said he had not been subjected to any ill-treatment by his captors; unlike the editor, Mark Chivumuka, and a reporter, Ray Choto, who were tortured by military and secret police.

90-year-old's fiftieth

Riyadh: A Saudi villager over 90 years old has taken a 13-year-old for his fiftieth birthday. The man from the Jizan region in the south of the kingdom has about 50 children ranging from 12 to 65 years old. It is assumed that the villager, who lives on a diet of dates and yoghurt, must have divorced dozens of women, because Islam allows a Muslim to have a maximum of four wives at any one time. (AFP)



Fred Marafono, a former SAS man, now fighting as a mercenary for the Government in Freetown

Plea to Mandela as gunmen kill another party official

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

AN urgent meeting with President Mandela was being sought yesterday by leaders of South Africa's United Democratic Movement (UDM) following the murder of a second party official.

Roelf Meyer, the party's deputy president, said talks with Mr Mandela — who has postponed visits to Uganda, Switzerland and Germany

that he was scheduled to begin yesterday — about the killings were imperative.

Police said they were not ruling out a link between the latest murder outside Cape Town and the deaths of 11 people in an attack by gunmen on a funeral vigil at Richmond in KwaZulu-Natal province, hundreds of miles away, on Saturday night.

The murdered mourners were supporters of the African National Congress (ANC) in an area of South

Africa where thousands of people have been murdered for their political allegiances.

The attack came only hours after Sifiso Nkabinde, Secretary-General of the UDM and a former ANC warlord, died in a hail of bullets fired at his car in the centre of Richmond.

More than 1,000 police and troops are patrolling the Richmond area amid rising concern that political violence could erupt there and in

other parts of South Africa in the run-up to the country's second democratic general election in a few months' time.

Valindela Matiyase, deputy chairman of the UDM in the Western Cape province, was shot dead when he was called to the front door of his home in the Samora Machel informal settlement outside Philippi, near Cape Town, at dusk on Sunday. Police said two gunmen fired four shots at him.

The UDM was formed in 1997 by Mr Meyer, a former National Party minister who was its chief negotiator in constitutional talks with the ANC and Bantu Holomisa, a one-time black homeland leader, after his expulsion from the ANC.

The party is claiming big gains in support in the Western Cape province, where the ANC is mounting a fierce campaign to win control from the National Party at the election.

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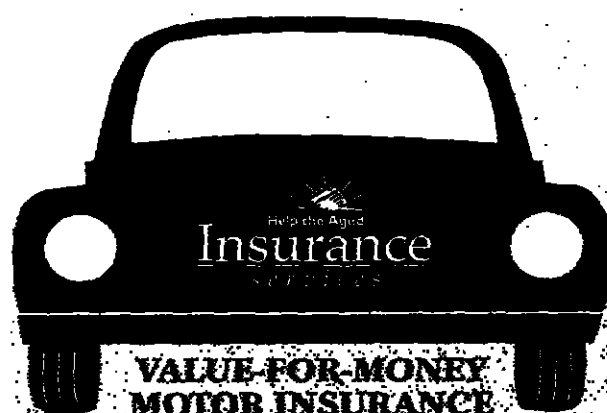
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The agony of psoriasis

Katherine Duncan-Jones has defeated the virulent condition that made her hands and feet bleed

At the end of August 1996 both my daughters left home to take up graduate scholarships in America. I knew that they would probably never again spend extended periods in my house, but persuaded myself that I had "coping strategies" well in place. Within days of their departure, I embarked on a more than usually expensive holiday, a Hellenic cruise. I calculated that during the course of this holiday I would become really keen to get back, even to an empty home, and to resume my absorbing work on Shakespeare's Sonnets.

This was indeed the case, and I returned to much enjoyable busy-ness, not consciously marred by what I took to be a moderately virulent outbreak of athlete's foot caused by too many visits to my swimming club in a prep school, where term began in early September. After a week or three I went to my GP and told her I thought I had athlete's foot. Amid pleasant chat of this and that, she sat at her computer and prescribed some antifungal cream. I warned one or two fellow members of the swimming club that there might be infections around in the women's changing room, used at other times of day by "away" rugby teams of little boys.

My spirits were slightly dampened, as autumn and a new academic year set in, by a sense that as a responsible citizen I should cease to visit the swimming pool. I normally went three times a week — for fear of infecting others. I hit on what I thought a rather brilliant solution: I bought rubber foot coverings and went swimming in them a couple of times, hoping to avoid passing the infection on, but was surprised to discover what a part it was to have the feet encased in latex. Perhaps this experience gave me some empathy with the condom-wearing sex.

The only real solution seemed to be to abandon swimming, especially since the athlete's foot was, if anything, more virulent, despite a second instalment of antifungal cream, and had now spread to the right foot as well. I also noticed that, immersed in the morning paper, I seemed clumsily to have cut some flaps of skin loose on the palm of my right hand while peeling my apple and pear with a sharp knife at breakfast. However, being extremely busy, as October and November advanced, with teaching, lecturing and writing the introduction to my edition of the Sonnets, I didn't devote much thought to any of this, though I did buy lots of hypoallergenic plasters to keep my cracking and bleeding soles more or less in one piece. My morning and bedtime routines — peeling off the day's plasters and applying a fresh set, with what seemed like great cardboard-like rafts of skin coming off — became increasingly disgusting.

My doctor changed her tune, and decided that either it never had been athlete's foot or that the athlete's foot was second-



Katherine Duncan-Jones: "I kept thinking of the Little Mermaid, who was permitted to exchange her fishtail for legs at the price of feeling that she was treading on knives"

ary to some other skin problem. She set things in train for an appointment with an NHS dermatologist, although she was fairly sure that what I had would eventually be diagnosed as "acute dermatitis" — doctors' Greek for bad skin trouble.

She recommended that I wear cork insoles. With terrifying speed, lacking my habitual exercise, I became alarmingly lame and unfit. I kept thinking of Hans Christian Andersen's *Little Mermaid*, who was permitted to exchange her fishtail for human legs only at the price of feeling that with every step she was treading on knives. Normally an early riser, I took to lying in bed in a state of acute apprehension, dreading the pain when I put my bleeding feet to the floor, and not at all

sure I could face the small amount of walking required to get me downstairs, and to work. After a few minutes I usually became injured to the pain, especially once I had strapped up my cracked, bleeding feet with rolls of the sticking plaster I was now using, but I did make careful calculations of the least amount of walking I could get away with, and became quite stressed if I had to walk any farther. Meanwhile, the skin on my hands was flapping off in large pieces, and I dreaded meeting anyone who might shake my hand and feel its horny edges. My hands, like my feet, were now so cracked at the centre of the palm that sometimes they bled slightly. I began jokingly to refer to the condition as "my stigmata", adding

that whatever had caused it, it certainly couldn't be starchy.

By December I was tottering from foot to foot in pain. My left foot was still the worse, however, and my doctor alarmed me with a bit of medical humour, saying: "We don't want you to lose it." She prescribed powerful steroid cream — across the counter stuff had done little — and suggested that I wrap my hands and feet in plastic bags. I was glad that I had no current bed companion to see or feel my wrapped extremities. My elder daughter, back for Christmas, fell about laughing at the sight of my nocturnal plastications. Sometimes I kept my feet wrapped and anointed during the day as well as at night, concealed with socks and trousers,

and hoped that no one would see the bulging at my ankles or hear the occasional surrenders of the plastic. By mid-December, when I went to give a lecture in Switzerland, I had become a steroid junkie.

I was embarrassed, in a nice Swiss hotel room, to find no way of dressing and undressing without scattering heaps of dead skin on the carpet. In the new year, I tried to cut down on the steroids. My feet were ever so slightly better, my hands a lot worse, but there was no doubt that all four extremities were madly and painfully exfoliating all the time. Night after night, in a warm bath, I would try to rub them clear of dead skin flaps, hoping they would be nice and soft the next day, but new flaps and cracks appeared in no time. Finally,

in March, I saw the dermatologist, and hand and foot psoriasis was diagnosed — a condition rare enough to be unfamiliar to many GPs, but common enough for the Oxfordshire Health Authority to have invested in ultraviolet light boxes for treatment of the condition. During the summer of 1997, I had a 12-week series of sessions with ultraviolet light and this treatment, combined with a continual applying of moisturising and emollient creams, brought my feet, at least, to a better condition than they had been in for years.

The connection between mind, consciousness and body is notoriously intimate and inscrutable. In *Piet of Clay* (1996), Anthony Storr traces a recurring pattern of events in which an individual who has undergone severe illness or depression emerges from it convinced that he can now impart spiritual insight and detailed guidance to mankind on how life should be lived. Many celebrated "gurus" such as St Ignatius, Jung and Gurdjieff have undergone such mind-changing illnesses, and have persuaded large numbers of followers of the universal value of the insights they gained during them.

In my case, the pattern of events has been reversed: I have been led to rationalism rather than mysticism. I am less certain than ever that I have any belief of my own, let alone anything of value to impart to others. Rather than being, like St Paul, that "I know that I bear in my own body the marks of the Lord Jesus", I now meditate with sympathy but considerable cynicism on the agonising lives of such celebrated stigmatics as St Paul or Padre Pio. Spending long periods in dark cells meditating on one's own sin and unworthiness in the sight of the Almighty must be the perfect recipe for exacerbating psoriasis, a stress-related disorder of the immune system that is aggravated by lack of sunlight. Another site where psoriatic patches can break out badly is round the midriff, leading to "hides in the side" wounds. For a short time in October 1996, I had this symptom, too.

Until 1997 I was a regular churchgoer. Despite a strong inclination towards pantheism, I felt myself to be sustained and nourished at some deep level by Christian ritual and worship. Since more often, covering from psoriasis, I find that whatever frail thread it was that connected me with institutional religion has snapped. As an Anglican I had never been required to take such saintly miracles as the stigmata particularly seriously. Still, the close parallels between this form of psoriasis and Christ's wounds might have led me to a deeper faith. In practice, I find that my healed and anointed feet no longer carry me into places of worship.

● This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in *The London Review of Books*.

I am not mad, touch wood

Obsessive behaviour is often just a means of relieving stress, as Miranda Ingram discovers

Molly Passmore is a perfectly intelligent woman, the family breadwinner and mother of two small children. Every time she gets into her car she has to touch wood, inside her head at least, to ensure a safe journey. "It is a particular piece of wood, in a particular place, on a certain Welsh mountainside," the media professional explains.

"I have not only to touch it, mentally, but get the feel of the wood under my fingertips right. Sometimes this involves going over it several times. If I have a passenger I can't talk to them till I've done it — hopefully, they just think I'm a bit distracted. Other times the kids ask 'When are we going to move, Mum?' I can hardly tell them their mother is a complete nutter who's busy touching wood in her head so that we don't have an accident."

Jenny Charles, a solicitor, pats doors three times — just under the handle, with her right hand, after closing them — which can be a bit of a trial when there are clients in the room. "I stand so I'm hiding the door while I do it and just hope they don't notice," she says. "A couple of times I have



tried not doing it but I can't concentrate on my work, or what they are saying, and have to make an excuse to go in and out of the door again and do it properly."

Nadine Wild also pats, but it is drawers for her. "Even when they are obviously closed, I have to pat them until they feel closed," she says. "It's completely crazy."

Wild, an academic at the top of her profession, also has to

step over joins in the carpet, with the correct foot forward, or go back and do it again if she doesn't get it right. Now she has started on taps. "It's definitely getting worse as I'm getting older," Wild says. "Now I have to put a hand on each tap and twist until they turn off fully in symmetry. And I have to turn locks in doors numerous times until the click feels right. It drives my husband crazy. He says it's

spooky having this apparently intelligent woman endlessly clicking all the locks at night."

In all cases, the women agree that while the obsessions are irritating, they dare not fail to do them: doom will surely follow if the ritual is not observed. "It drives me mad that I'm doing it," says Passmore, "but I don't risk not doing it. What if we had a crash?"

Wild cannot risk abandoning the lock ritual, but was horrified recently to catch her four-year-old son patting drawers. "I couldn't bear it when I saw his little hands following the same absurd pattern as mine. I thought 'God, what have I done? I've turned him crazy, too!'"

Crazy or certifiable? Scratch the surface and almost everyone seems to have a private obsession: slipping drinks to the count of three, tapping a boiled egg seven times, lining up pens and pencils in a certain order, or stepping on and off the footpath before crossing. Should we be worried? Is this the first step into the asylum? "Not at all," says Professor Peter Fonagy, of the department of psychoanalysis at University College London. "Firstly this sort of behaviour, which is extremely widespread and not restricted to women, is quite separate from full-blown compulsive obsessive disorder, which is a very serious illness. It is to do with your personality type, mostly, and to a certain extent with your social inheritance — background."

Certainly the women interviewed by *The Times* recalled watching similar behaviour in their parents — obsessive tidiness, lining up the salt and pepper — and see it also in their siblings.

"On a certain level we are all like children," Fonagy says. "It is a state called magical phenomenism whereby you believe that if you do X then Y will happen, even if you know perfectly well, intellectually, that there is no connection."

"Like standing on the platform trying to will the next train to be the Richmond train. You think that if you look at the board in the right way for the right length of time you can make the next train be the right train. Children have this very powerfully and perfectly normally, and most of us, when we are under a lot of stress, revert to childish ways of thinking."

"I had an undergraduate patient who sincerely believed that he would do OK in his finals as long as he didn't change his underwear in the three weeks running up to the exams, even though he knew perfectly well that the state of his underwear couldn't possibly influence questions set weeks before."

"When we are frightened or nervous we quite often start to believe in trivial things. This sort of behaviour is analogous to superstition, or carrying mascots, for example. Each person has to find their own way of coping — one person might fidget, another develops a phobia and a third feels sick."

If you are the personality type lined up for repetitive lock-turning then that is just the way you cope, he says, even if it might not be the most efficient solution. It gets worse when there is an area of your life that you feel you are not fully in control of or coping with. Patting the door gives you the comfort of being in control of something. "If you're going through a particularly obsessive patch," Fonagy says, "it is probably a message to yourself that an area of your life needs sorting out — you're postponing a decision, your elderly mother is getting you down, you've got problems at work. Stop worrying about the obsession itself and look at the rest of your life."

He says that indulging in secret door-patting or tap-turning rituals does not mean you are either more, or less, likely than anyone else to develop a serious clinical disorder. "In fact," Fonagy concludes, "people who behave like this are usually pretty sound people — good at their work, reliable and conscientious."

When a nosebleed becomes a danger

KING'S LYNN in Norfolk was Royalist in the Civil War, and the local people seem never to have lost this tendency. They delight in welcoming the Royal Family when they are installed at Sandringham and have a particular affection for Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, dating from when King George VI was alive and the Royal Family spent so much time there together.

It is a pity, therefore, that her new year visits seem to coincide with the occasional medical emergency. This time last year, the Queen Mother fractured her femur while visiting the stables; this year she has had a severe nosebleed, which needed attention at the local NHS hospital.

A nosebleed, or epistaxis "as we doctors call it" (to use Private Eye's phraseology, does not sound very sinister and is not in the same league as the repair of a fractured femur. However, a nosebleed, particularly in an older person, can be a true medical emergency. Stopping it may require the presence of an experienced ear, nose and throat surgeon and also, on occasion, a skilled radiologist to find the bleeding point.

Most nosebleeds, such as those suffered by young children through the tiffs and bangs of playground life or too much exploration with their fingers (known medically as epistaxis digitorum), are easy to stop. The sufferer should sit upright with the head inclined slightly forward, and grasp the nose between finger and thumb at the junction of the soft and hard parts. Squeezing the nose at this point compresses Kiesselbach's plexus of blood vessels, which are situated in Little's area (Kiesselbach and Little were 19th-century surgeons). The pressure should be maintained for at least ten minutes. When it is released, in most cases bleeding will have stopped.

If this first-aid measure does not work the anterior portion of the nose may have to be packed with gauze. This presents no great problem. In my youth, one-inch gauze ribbon saturated with BIPP (bismuth, iodoform and paraffin paste) — devised by Lord Lister and later used in the First World War for packing

wounds — could be left in position for hours or even days without becoming unpleasant. Usually, this staunches the bleeding. More recently, films of an expanding foam, Microcel, are inserted into the nose. This absorbs the blood, expands and exerts pressure on any of the bleeding Kiesselbach's vessels. If this is unsuccessful, the bleeding point may be cauterised.

Malcolm Keene, a consultant ear, nose and throat surgeon at St Bartholomew's Hospital, says that the method of treating nosebleeds is determined by their severity.

MEDICINE CHEST
DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

Most can be dealt with by a first-aid worker, the next stage up needs a doctor and the worst nosebleeds can pose quite a problem for the most experienced surgeon. In particular, nosebleeds in older people who have arteriosclerosis — hardening of the arteries — can cause difficulties.

The older the patient, the more likely is the nosebleed to be torrential — and once it is torrential, finding the source of the torrent requires considerable skill. In older patients, too, the blood is likely to come from a long way back in the nose and is often the result of the rupture of a branch of the sphenopalatine artery, particularly if the patient's arteries are hardened and weakened

by age and the blood pressure is raised.

The elderly, too, frequently take aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to counteract arthritis. These drugs also make bleeding more profuse. Many of us like to think that the Queen Mother's remarkable resilience and intellectual sharpness are a part of the advantages of alcohol in moderation — unfortunately, however, useful this is in stopping the blood clotting in the coronary arteries, it may also increase a tendency to bleed.

Bleeding from the back of the nose from a ruptured branch of the sphenopalatine artery will probably need specialist attention. Only when people remember the "nose trick" — the splinting of a drink through the nose when choking or laughing — do they remember the connection between nose and mouth. In the past a gauze pad was introduced through the mouth and pulled into position at the back of the nose. Now an expandable balloon, such as is found on a Foley's catheter, is introduced in the same way. Once the balloon is in position, it is inflated with air and when the pressure of the balloon is greater than the blood pressure, bleeding from the artery stops. Rarely, a major artery needs tying.

Two warnings: a persistent, watery, bloodstained discharge from one nostril may be an early sign of a nasal tumour and needs expert investigation. Also, patients with recurrent nosebleeds should have a blood count to include haematological diseases.

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Most of us will at some time end up stealing from our employers. **Jon Ashworth** reports on how we have become a nation of petty criminals

Most frauds are uncovered because someone speaks out, but fear or recrimination puts

Faced with the evidence, employers are starting to clamp down. Legislation aimed at protecting whistle-blowers at work seems certain to speed the process. Employees who regularly work late and never take holidays may commander suspicion.


The weakening UK economy will hasten the process, because fraudsters find it harder to cover their tracks as companies tighten procedures. The perpetrators panic and take bigger risks. Weak controls and management indifference have enabled fraud at

David Sherwin, head of fraud investigations at Ernst & Young, says: "Once an employee has won the trust of senior management they



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More than simply black and white

Michael Gove on the Lawrence inquiry and a new McCarthyism

When it was published, Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* was an impressionistic landscape of America. It may now have become a mirror of Britain. The New York author illuminated a city in neurosis, with race distorting reason. I fear that we may be succumbing to the same neurosis.

Later this week the Home Secretary will receive the report of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. Jack Straw's response will be made in charged circumstances. There is a widespread desire to see a conclusion reached which will satisfy Stephen Lawrence's parents. But the terms on which the inquiry has been conducted give rise to legitimate doubts that the right lessons will be learnt.

It is impossible to consider the murder of Stephen without feeling both admiration and anger. The dignified bearing of Neville and Doreen Lawrence, their quiet persistence in the pursuit of justice and their determination that some good should spring from an unspeakable evil, are qualities that compel admiration. The knowledge that Stephen's murderers are still abroad quickens the blood to anger. That anger is only swelled by the catalogue of errors which marred the investigation.

It is not easy, therefore, to question whether justice, which has been denied the Lawrences, has been served by the inquiry for which they campaigned. Just as questioning the wisdom of handgun legislation after the Dunblane killings seemed an act of insensitivity, so raising questions about this inquiry may seem to demean the Lawrences' grief.

That is not my intention. The Lawrences deserve to see justice done. But the inquiry has not much of the whiff of Salem to leave the unbiased anything but uneasy. Even before proceedings began the wishful finger was flexing. On the eve of the inquiry, *The Observer* ran a story alleging that the chairman, Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, was "insensitive" to racial issues. The accusations were diplomatically dealt with, but a sour note had been struck.

On one level, Sir William had been put on warning that his conduct would be scrutinised by an audience suspicious of his hidden prejudices. Indeed, during the inquiry he halted questioning of Mrs Lawrence intending to explore her attitudes to the police. On a deeper level, the manner in which the inquiry would be viewed was skewed. A proper emphasis on judicial impartiality had been overtaken by ideological considerations. It is a practice, sadly, commonplace in America, where the judicial process has become dangerously politicised. The shade of the courthouse where O.J. Simpson was tried now hung over the proceedings.

The inquiry itself also recalled another unhappy episode in American justice. The lawyers for the Lawrences sought, at moments, to have served their apprenticeship under Joseph McCarthy. Just as the senator brought a

blunderbuss to his hearings, so the Lawrences' lawyers, led by Michael Mansfield, QC, deployed the charge of racism with indiscriminate zeal.

The shabby treatment of one individual stands out. The first policeman on the scene after Stephen was attacked was an off-duty officer, who was returning from a church meeting. He did not know that Stephen had been stabbed. Indeed, Stephen's friend, Duwayne Brooks believed that the assailants had used an iron bar. The officer did not seek to move Stephen, recognising that he lay in the recovery position. Only when an ambulance arrived was the extent of Stephen's bleeding apparent.

This officer, whose church was racially mixed and whose Christian fellow-feeling for all races had never been doubted before, was accused of standing idly by because he did not wish "to get his hands dirty with black blood". His conduct was questioned by the Lawrence team. And yet this same officer had draped his car blanket over Stephen and recovered it, after the ambulance arrived. Was that the action of a man who scorned to touch black blood? How can genuine evils be properly addressed when Good Samaritans are treated like this?

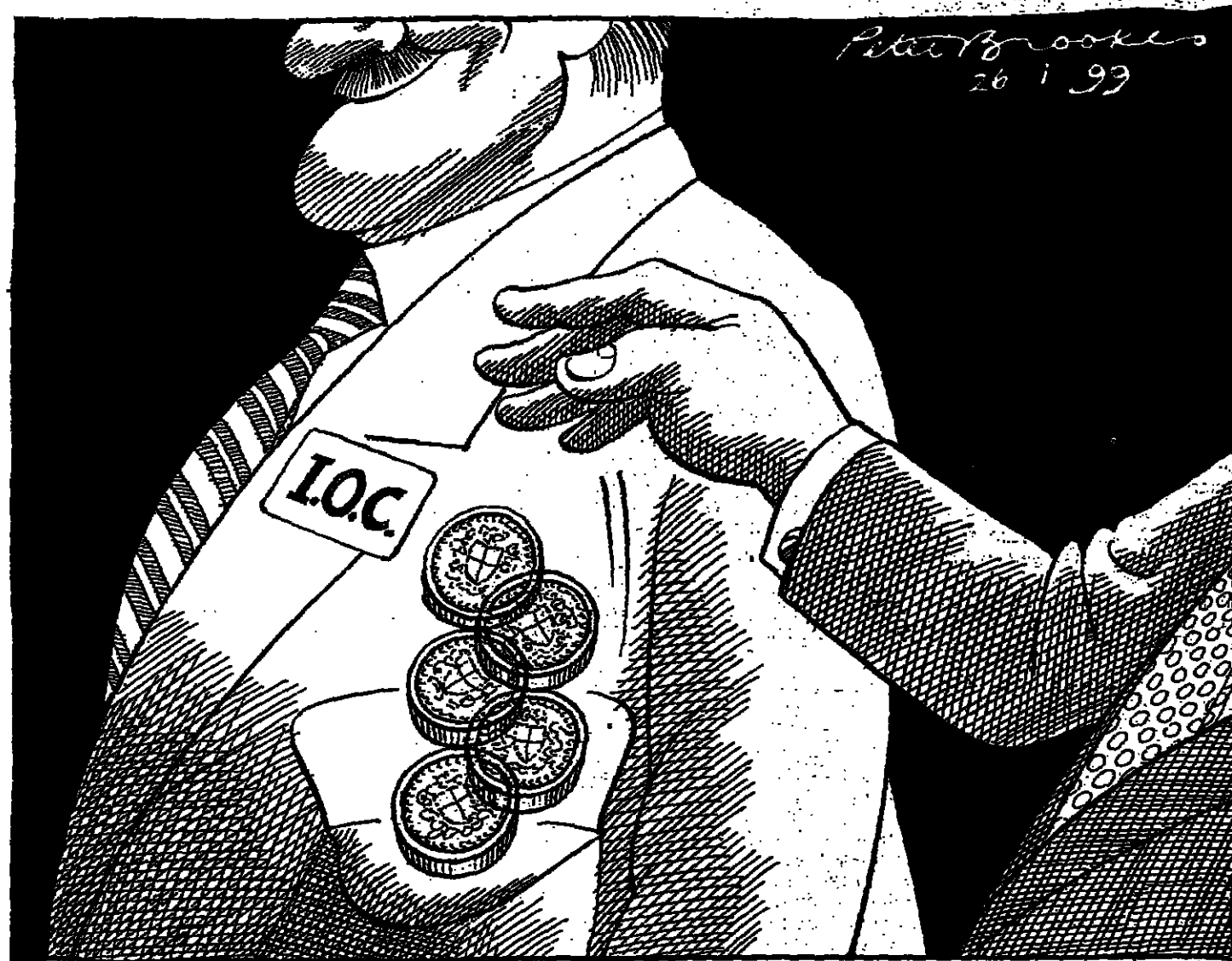
And how can racism be properly tackled when the accusation is flung not just at individuals, but at an institution? When the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, attended the inquiry he was asked, repeatedly, to concede that his force was "institutionally racist". Sir Paul has never tried to deny there is racism in his force, indeed he pledged to deal with the problem on taking office.

There is room for legitimate debate about how effectively he has dealt with the question. But that debate is disfigured by the insistence that Sir Paul concedes the principle of collective guilt, instead of rooting out individual wickedness. Some institutions are explicitly racist — from the Dutch Reform Church to the British National Party. But what does the term mean when applied to the Metropolitan Police? Is the bobby's helmet the modern equivalent of a Klan's hood?

Do those who talk of institutional racism not realise that they are falling into the same error as racism, making sweeping assumptions about groups instead of forming reasoned judgments about individuals? Is it not better to forge a sense of common purpose in the fight against prejudice, rather than seeking to divide society from its protectors?

Mr Mansfield and the Lawrences' solicitor, Imran Khan, are both radical socialists. It would be tempting to conclude that their approach to the inquiry springs from their commitment to ideology rather than the truth, the taste for the police rather than love of justice. But that would be to fall into the same trap as them, to tar with the broad brush rather than bring the searchlight properly to bear.

His last ship, as it were, was the National Maritime Museum, where



A man of true Resolution

Amid the official tributes, personal memories of a remarkable Admiral of the Fleet

When a retired top-brass Service chief dies in his late seventies, full of honours, the obvious and decorous things are done. Obituaries recall his distinctions in war and peace, and in a last paragraph the retirement years are mentioned: trustee of this and that, expert on whatever. Decent, passionless tributes are paid and another public life is over.

I have been staring all morning at just such obituaries, sober milestones at the point where a finished life fades tidily into history. And somehow they will not do. For Admiral Lord Lewin — Terry Lewin — has died; and though he was pushing 80, and I had known him for barely five years, the sense of outraged loss will not fade. "Terry being ill and dying," said a far younger friend indignantly, "is just so bloody out of character."

There must be an unsuspected number of people who feel the same. Because of this, and because one of Lewin's last projects is nearing fruition at Greenwich, I indulge me for a few minutes while I try to convey this vivid man, and why his departure feels as if a firework display had prematurely ended.

The obituaries tell the naval story: of the 18-year-old thrown straight into war as a midshipman in the Mediterranean, the young lieutenant mentioned in dispatches and awarded the DSC. He served in Arctic and Malta convoys and Channel actions before D-Day. In command after the war, he modernised the rum ration into beer, and navigated a changing, striking the Navy with the rare distinction of making no enemies. His role as Chief of Defence Staff in the Thatcher War Cabinet is historic even Falklands sceptics such as me admire the steadiness and professionalism with which he masterminded that all-but-impossible war. But never mind all that stuff. He did not bore on about it, remarking only that being First Sea Lord was the "dullest job in the Navy". All ranks, speaking of him, tend to agree that there was never a harrumph or a tantrum in the man, however senior or stressed. "He was never angry," says Rear-Admiral Richard Hill, his biographer, and sometime subordinate. "He never raised his voice. His technique was to make you feel that you never wanted to let him down."

His last ship, as it were, was the National Maritime Museum, where

he was chairman for eight years to 1995. There, as a recent trustee, I first met him, and last saw him in the autumn in a hard hat, clambering round the construction site of the new Neptune Court. This is the £20 million development which he initiated, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (whose functionaries, like many former ministers and civil servants, still flinch at the memory of the fusillade of Lewin faces which greeted any obstruction). This week, from the director's office to the front desk, the museum mourns him with an almost shocking sincerity.

He saw it through storms, like the row over the *Titanic* exhibition, in which he calmly thought his position through and then stood firm and tranquil in the face of ill-informed ranting. He steered towards a new century with a style which combined a taste for innovation with a conviction that maritime history is vital to British identity. At 70 years old, he pushed things forward like a man half his age.

Richard Ormond, the director, says: "He had a wonderfully clear sense of history; it was in his bloodstream and he felt that, without historical resonance, you lack a dimension. He would stride into the museum and say: 'Do you know what happened 150 years ago today?' He was passionate about the bookshop and getting people to read. But he also knew that history has to be presented anew to each generation."

He was entirely at home not only with Nelson and Cook and his own 20th Century Seapower gallery, but with the more controversial plans of the renewed museum which, engagingly, he now will not see the Greenpeace pod, the ecology and sea science, the modern sculptures and the challenging acknowledgement of slavery and the Opium Wars.



Libby Purves

names of Cook's ships. They resonate, as he intended them to, through all human history and on into the future. Nor shall I forget hearing him at the Seawards literary festival reading a passage from Cook's log. He closed the book at the end of a narrow escape on the perilous *Terra Incognita*, grinned, glanced around the riveted audience and added a long, delighted "Theew".

In his own travels he visited every point Cook touched 200 years ago; in Dusky Bay, New Zealand, he found the remains of the two trees Endeavour tied up to.

There is a portrait of him by John Wonnacott, finished a few months ago. Go and see it some time: it is an epic canvas, 11ft tall, showing the admiral glancing up at the ceiling of the Painted Hall at Greenwich where Nelson lay in state. Wren's

Royal Naval College meant a great deal to him, and some of his last energies were spent firing off more faxes to newspapers and journalists, in the battle against the drooling obtuseness of governments which cannot grasp what a treasure it is, and what use it could have been put to in the service of wider understanding of our maritime and naval heritage.

Even so, it was the devil of a job for the painter and the trustees to persuade Admiral Lord Lewin to pose in uniform. "I've left the Navy now," he would protest, turning up yet again in a lounge suit. Eventually he agreed, but even then, says the painter, he brought the wrong tie. I spoke to John Wonnacott yesterday, and from his brief but intense painters' dealings, he offered a strong image of Terry Lewin's personality. "He, himself, into the world, be a string of what he called 'Useless Information'. Once we roared up the hill to the Observatory — he moved as a great speed — and he taught me all about the Harrison clock. I think he loved the museum, in the end, as much as he loved the Navy. He'd done so much, had such enthusiasm for so many things, but in his last few days he took the trouble to ring me about another commission I'm doing, though he could only manage a few sentences. I've never met any chap like him, ever."

Nor have I. When the diagnosis of inoperable cancer was made, early in December and out of the blue, he had been asked to appear in a discussion programme talking with the Duke of Edinburgh about the new galleries. "We did it without him, and I sent a tape to the hospital. A while later, when he had come home to be nursed by his close-knit family, the telephone rang. It was Terry Lewin himself, giving cheerful approval to the programme. We live near by. I asked whether he wanted any audio tapes to pass the time."

"No, far too busy. I've got Richard Hill here all day working on the biography. Tell everyone it's fine; family here, spirits high, hoping for a miracle!" Then he said goodbye. Full of endeavour and of resolution, right to the last. I can't believe he's gone.

comment@the-times.co.uk



Exit Bron?

AUBERON WAUGH is poised to stroll out of the *Literary Review*, the magazine he has edited for 13 years. Richard Ingrams, Editor of the *Oldie*, has offered him a flat and a column. This would enable Waugh (pictured), our most open-minded reactionary, to escape the study he shares with his bracing deputy, Nancy Slade.

Waugh is troubled by the illness of his close friend Susan Ingham (pictured), widow of the late Cabinet minister, and spends much time visiting her in hospital. Bron declines to confirm the story, but Ingrams says: "I have offered it to him. We are very keen to get him. One of Bron's cruelties is ranker. He has had enough of the *Literary Review*. He should impose himself more but he is too sweet-natured."

If he does go, I fear for the future of Naim Attallah's organ. It is bankrolled by such generous souls as Lord Hanson and Sir Paul Getty, but without Bron the night not had the magazine so aluring.



MPs discussed part-time work in committee yesterday: government MPs attending? None.

Brief lives

THE Lord Chancellor bears the stiletto marks of Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws, my favourite twiddle. The baroness marched into Lord Irvine of Lairg's office to assail him over his Access to Justice Bill (she is disturbed that legalaiders will not be allowed to choose a defence lawyer). Phrases such as "loyalty" and "vote against" were used. Terry has now promised changes. No opposition, I'm sure.

WORDS: that Tony Blair looks kindly on Charles Kennedy, the LibDem leadership favourite, has a great deal to do with his support for his plan to scrap the House of Lords. Campbell, though well meaning, will have done little to charm independent-minded, let-alone munching activists.

Striking gold

JACK CUNNINGHAM'S patronage could become the gold standard. Since we put him in the five-star Conrad International in Brussels it has been made a member of the Leading Hotels of the World — a select club representing 300 sumptuous pads.

JEREMY IRONS had found guilt. The actor, who has scored a rise in *Ch Ch Ch* says: "My obituary did terrible things to remind over the past 700 years, one of which was knocking the top off Killy Castle. So I am going to try and put it



right, jolly good. That should make up for the potato famine.

Offside

IN my piece "own goal" I incorrectly stated that "Tony Pendry, chairman of the Football Trust" has awarded a contract to a company which employed his ex-wife's research. And unjustly might think I smacked of cynicism. I now gather that Pendry did not actually award the contract. It was awarded by Philip French, head of communications at the trust. Apologies to Pendry for any distress caused.

DRAM to Lord Russell Johnston, first Scots President of the Council of Europe. Well done.

Lightweight

A SEVERED-down operation Paul Edwards. The well-loved news anchor of BBC News has lost two stints. It couldn't appear like a big blow to the nation. Try telling Derm.

JASPER GERARD

Quite simply, the nonsense has gone far enough. Daily, the terror gangs mutilate and torture. Northern Ireland is descending into a moral cesspit

Sean O'Callaghan

A new reign of terror and intimidation has descended on Northern Ireland. It afflicts those large areas that fall under the control of the "military representatives" of the loyalist and republican parties — Sinn Féin, the Ulster Democratic Party and the Progressive Unionist Party. We would know little of this if it were not for Families Against Intimidation and Terror, an heroic group of human rights activists who have risked their lives to expose thuggery.

We are led to believe that the IRA, UVF and UDA are observing ceasefires. This is palpable nonsense and everyone in Northern Ireland, outside the Cinderella-land that is the Northern Ireland Office, knows it.

Punishment beatings — a euphemism for mutilation, torture and intimidation — have increased dramatically in recent months as these organisations

have imposed their control on the communities they purport to represent. No one in the Northern Ireland Office, least of all the Secretary of State, Mr Mowlem, seems much concerned. The attitude seems to be: while terrorism is confined to the ghettos, why worry?

The sheer absence of morality, the knee-bending to appeasement and a view that to say nothing and do nothing will somehow ensure the survival of the Good Friday agreement — is repugnant. Furthermore, it will fatally undermine the peace process.

Gerry Adams, David Ervine and Gary McMichael must be told by the Prime Minister (not the Secretary of State, whom they regard as full of hot air) that one more act of violence by the organisations they represent will bring prisoner releases to a halt and see them expelled from the

process until they accept and implement the Mitchell principles of non-violence.

Quite simply, the nonsense has gone far enough. Daily, the terror gangs mutilate and torture. Families are forced into exile, racketeering, criminality and drug-dealing are widespread. Northern Ireland is descending into a moral cesspit. Is this what the Good Friday agreement brought us? Is this what we voted for with such hope in our hearts?

If the Government does not use the sanctions at its disposal, the terrorists will behave as they please. Indeed, the peace process is fast becoming the gangster process.

There is another reason for increasing violence. Even as Sinn Féin and loyalist fringe

parties pay lip-service to the condemnation of "punishment beatings" they also use ugly euphemisms to argue that a "rough form of community justice" will unfortunately continue until the "policing vacuum" in Northern Ireland has been filled. The beatings are intended to cow the State into neutering the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The IRA-Sinn Féin leadership in particular is orchestrating intimidation in nationalist areas as part of a strategy to influence the Patten Commission's report into the future of the RUC.

The objective is clear. IRA-Sinn Féin says that the RUC is an unacceptable police force and must be disbanded — to be replaced by a force acceptable to the IRA. In its

pervert logic, the beatings are a proof of the so-called "policing vacuum". Clearly, the republican leadership — and that includes Adams and Martin McGuinness — are determined to destroy the RUC. If they are allowed to get away with it, goodbye to the peace process.

Fears for the future of the RUC, the failure of the IRA to decommission, the release of terrorist prisoners — all of these sicken the ordinary people who voted for the Good Friday agreement. As First Minister designate of the Northern Ireland Assembly, David Trimble will be politically and morally correct in current circumstances to refuse the IRA entry into an executive designed to govern Northern Ireland. The terrorist leaders are, after all, ignoring their obligations under the peace agreement. It is they who are behaving violently, and so it is they who

deserve censure and isolation. Is it really beyond the power of Government to bring the terrorist gangs to heel? There is a mean spiritedness in the corridors of power and its name is cowardice.

If the present situation is allowed to continue, and if Mr Trimble is forced to accept IRA-Sinn Féin into an executive without decommissioning, the agreement will collapse. IRA/Sinn Féin will bring down the agreement itself anyway if it is pressured to begin decommissioning — but at least the stench of moral corruption that surrounds the process will then have been dissipated. Blair and Aherm must face them down, otherwise all is lost.

Sean O'Callaghan is a former IRA commander and the author of *The Informer*.

comment@the-times.co.uk



CHRISTIANS IN PERIL

Burnings, murder and the new intolerance of Asia

Mahatma Gandhi expected the India of his dreams "to be wholly tolerant, with its religions working side by side with one another." For India's Christians, those expectations have been brutally betrayed since last March, when the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed a new Indian Government. The mob murder in Orissa at the weekend of the Australian evangelical missionary Graham Staines, incinerated in his car with his two young sons by Hindu extremists, brought to 109 the recorded acts of violence against Christians in ten months. That compares with 50 in the entire half-century since independence.

Attempts to invoke Gandhi's spirit of tolerance by India's Christian leaders, who last month led tens of thousands in a day of protest at the Jamuna River where Gandhi was cremated, have been pathetically ineffective against an orchestrated campaign by extremists affiliated to the BJP. In Gujarat, Christian appeals for official protection after dozens of assaults were answered by a renewed Christmas outbreak of church-burnings, forced "purification ceremonies", attacks on priests and nuns and the stoning of schools. Yesterday, even as India's leaders condemned the Staines murder and thousands flocked to the funeral, five other Christian missionaries were viciously beaten in Allahabad in an attack applauded by the Bajrang Dal, the militants behind the Staines murder.

India's Christians are not alone in experiencing a great upsurge of intolerance and violence. In China and Vietnam, persecution is ideologically driven; but from Pakistan to Nepal and Indonesia, Asian Christians are under assault as they have not been in living memory. What is puzzling is why they should be singled out.

These are minority communities so tiny that they cannot by definition pose any threat to national cohesion or majority beliefs. India's 23 million are only 2.6 per cent of the population. In Pakistan, where justice for Christians is now virtually

non-existent and police have deliberately exposed Christians to danger in some areas by ordering them to identify their houses with crosses, much as Nazi Germany instituted the yellow star for Jews, they number only three million, mostly desperately poor. In Indonesia, where the situation is more complex because many are also Chinese, Christians have more protection; the military has, in most cases, made serious efforts to quell Muslim-Christian riots like those which have just gutted the eastern town of Ambon. But in India, the Government stands accused, by moderate Hindus as well as Christians, of appeasing, if not covertly abetting, crimes committed by its own supporters.

History associates religious persecutions with weak leaders — Mary Tudor in England, Nicholas III in Russia — or with periods of national unease and self-doubt, as with the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain. Asia's economic disasters have made the vulnerable more exposed. But India has been relatively lightly touched by the Asian disease; there, the problem is a governing party that rose to power by cultivating a religious militancy whose destructiveness it is unable or unwilling to control. This is not a resurgence of anti-colonialism, despite the Hindu demands to expel all foreign missionaries: Christians have existed in India since AD52. It has more to do with caste; 60 per cent of Christians are Untouchables, and a further 15 to 20 per cent are Adivasis, remnants of India's down-trodden aboriginal tribes. Most of all, Christians are vulnerable precisely because they are so few; having discovered that attacking Muslims loses the BJP votes, Hindu activists have picked an easier target for their broader message of religious intolerance. The Prime Minister, Ahal Bihari Vajpayee, has told Christians: "I share your agony." The Staines murders will put his Government under pressure to translate his words of pain into effective action.

SAMARANCH MUST GO

His exit is the only way forward for the Olympics

The Olympic Games are facing their most shameful moment in more than a century of idealism and record-breaking achievement. Yet Juan Antonio Samaranch, the President of the International Olympic Committee, refuses to resign. Struggling for responsibility for the latest corruption scandal, he has called instead for a vote of confidence at an extraordinary IOC meeting next month. His move is a cynical attempt to save his career while sacrificing the six members most implicated in the corrupt awarding of the Summer and Winter Games to the winning cities. The affair, however, is far from over, and goes beyond squalid bribery. It has exposed the jealousies, power struggles and abuses of authority that lead directly to Señor Samaranch himself. Until he goes, the Olympic movement will remain blighted.

The former Spanish diplomat has never made a secret of his ambition. As Spanish Ambassador to Brezhnev's Soviet Union, he was accused of cosying up to the Russians as they were desperately trying to stop the post-Afghanistan boycott of the Moscow Olympics. Señor Samaranch spoke out strongly against the boycott: by coincidence, Moscow was one of the strongest proponents of his subsequent nomination as IOC President.

He promised, at the time, to be a clean broom to sweep out the age and dust that had settled in the IOC corridors. There were pointed reminders that Avery Brundage, the venerable former President, had been well over 80 when he retired in 1972, and had blighted his tenure with a reputation for autocratic behaviour. By 2001, when his term ends, Señor Sama-

ranch will be 81; and the stories of his vanity, arrogance and regal lifestyle make Mr Brundage seem a model of saintly humility by comparison.

Of all organisations, the Olympics, founded to promote moral as well as physical excellence, should be sensitive to the ideals of youth, brotherhood and international goodwill. But though these clichés are forever on the lips of Señor Samaranch and his cronies, there is little room for youth and less for goodwill, in their determination to remain in power.

Señor Samaranch has now headed the IOC for 18 years. The committee members are virtually his appointees. With the expansion of his power base into the Third World, he brought in members for whom the culture of mutual favours was both tempting and acceptable. They owed their position to him: he owed his power to their votes. The most notorious of the members now facing expulsion, Jean-Claude Ganga from the Congo, has been accused of making \$30,000 from a land deal set up by Salt Lake City. It was he who led the move in the IOC to extend the President's tenure so that Señor Samaranch, hungry for a Nobel Peace Prize, could remain in office beyond the age set for retirement.

Señor Samaranch now claims, with breathtaking disingenuity, that he knew nothing of corruption and is a victim of his underlings. If so, he should be dismissed for incompetence. If he knew but turned a blind eye, he should be sacked for dishonesty. Under his presidency, the movement has lost direction, vitality and now credibility. If the Olympics are to be saved, he should resign forthwith.

YOUNG EINSTEINS

The Times and the Royal Institution put youth on a pedestal

The scientific life presents a paradox. While the greatest discoveries are almost invariably made by the young, the world's academies are occupied by the old. Professors in their sixties preside over departments in which the creative work is done by research students in their twenties, with no tenure and no guarantee of continued employment. When they publish papers, their names often appear below those of their supervisors. Recognition comes creeping slow, too slow for many who leave the profession in despair.

Of course, nobody ever pretended that becoming a scientist was an easy option. It takes years to build a reputation, so that by the time it is achieved the most productive years are past. Scientists win prizes not for work they did last year, but a decade or more ago. The prizes which Alfred Nobel intended to recognise the finest achievements of that year are usually given to old men, and less often women, for discoveries made when they were young. The weight of hierarchy hangs heavy over the whole enterprise.

Tomorrow evening at the Royal Institution in London, the first in a series of lectures by young scientists is to be given by an Oxford chemist, Martin Westwell, on antibiotic resistance. The Times is backing the lecture series, the idea of Professor Susan Greenfield, the new and energetic

director of the Royal Institution. Her intentions are twofold. First, she hopes in a small way to challenge the hierarchy of science by giving an opportunity to young scientists — those under 40 — to lecture in the theatre made famous by Humphry Davy and Michael Faraday. Secondly, she proposes to award the best lecturer at the end of the year with a prize for scientific communication, a skill seldom rewarded in the normal order of things but increasingly recognised as vitally important.

She does not pretend that the lectures are more than a gesture towards redressing the balance in science. More needs to be done to improve the career structure of young scientists, and make them less subject to the weight of authority exerted by those who run departments. If a young patent examiner called Albert Einstein had needed a grant to pursue his researches in relativity, he would never have got one; nor would Charles Darwin have been allowed to set foot on HMS Beagle if he had known, and declared, that his experience there would unsettle the Creator. Great science is subversive, bold, and risky — the very qualities of youth. Too much of today's science, by contrast, is conservative and pedestrian, dominated by committees and rules which inhibit true creativity. And we may never know what we have missed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Blair must halt Ulster 'mob rule'

From Mr A. D. D. Kent

Sir, You are to be congratulated in drawing attention to the continuing violence in Northern Ireland (reports from Martin Fletcher, January 11, 14, 20, 22 and 25).

If, during the first week of January, five 'Home Counties' men had been shot by hooded thugs and a further dozen attacked since, not to mention the hundreds maimed during the last year, the matter would have had top priority, with calls from the media and MPs for immediate action.

Our Government, comfortably ensconced far away from this sickening daily round of injury and death, must take action and give full support to those within the communities who wish it to stop, but are reluctant to speak out.

For a start, the Prime Minister might go on Ulster TV to explain how others feel that such barbarous, unjustified behaviour sickens any civilised person; that these are not the actions of strong men but of weak, cowardly, inferior individuals; and, most important, that we expect the senior officials of all groupings to stamp it out now.

This psychopathic criminal behaviour is perilously close to mob rule.

Yours

A. D. KENT,
Long Mynd, Upper Station Road,
Hemfield, West Sussex BN5 9PH,
January 25

From Dr Alan Sked

Sir, The news that Adam Ingram, the Northern Ireland Security Minister, is to meet "relatives of an IRA unit killed by the SAS while attacking a Co Armagh police station" (report, January 22) provides yet more evidence of the nature of the "peace process".

Daily, more and more criminals — murderers, bombers, arsonists, thugs — are released on to the streets; daily more punishment hearings are being reported. Yet the IRA, which has already broken one ceasefire, insists that it will decommission no weapons and warns us that the present ceasefire is also in danger of being broken. The Government's response has been to appease it even further. The Prime Minister's promises, made (cynically? dishonestly?) before the Northern Irish referendum, have been carefully mothballed while Mo Mowlam has recently been reduced to silence.

The reasons are clear. Peace in Northern Ireland was brought about when it suited the IRA to get its most valuable terrorists out of prison. Now that that process is well under way, it can wait for more concessions or return to violence.

The question is whether the Government, having been duped once, will allow itself to be duped again. Or does it really believe that cross-border institutions for fisheries and tourism are what the IRA want to war to achieve?

Yours sincerely,

ALAN SKED,
Flat 3, Aberdeen Court,
68 Aberdeen Park,
Highbury, N5 2BH,
January 22

Sierra Leone conflict

From Lieutenant-Colonel Tim Spicer (ret)

Sir, I read with interest Sam Kiley's article today, "Send in the mercenaries, Mr Cook".

Sandline has always maintained its willingness to act in support of President Kabbah and Ecomog. If democracy is to survive in Sierra Leone the time has come to stop pretending that there is any way to negotiate a permanent peaceful settlement with the RUF (Revolutionary United Front). We must take the gloves off, defeat them in the field and shut off their external support.

This is the third time that the RUF has virtually taken over Sierra Leone. The international community must wake up to the threat: surely it is now time for First World governments to engage private military companies which, in the absence of military support from the West, are prepared to demonstrate the pragmatic application of an ethical foreign policy?

A vicious organisation like the RUF, which arrogantly commits unspeakable atrocities against its fellow countrymen and treats the international community with contempt, deserves to be destroyed, not given the benefit of a negotiated settlement.

Yours etc

TIM SPICER,
Sandline International,
535 Kings Road, SW10 0SZ,
January 22

The wrong signal

From Mr Brian Walker

Sir, Sign seen recently in a Leeds mobile phone shop: "100 minutes free calls — only £25."

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN WALKER,
23 Station Road,
Tadcaster, North Yorkshire LS24 9JE.
brian.walker@kpmg.co.uk,
January 19

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Corruption on an Olympian scale

From Mr George Moody-Stuart

Sir, The Olympic scandal (reports, January 23 and 25) may cause many people to question at what point a gift becomes a bribe.

For many years the standard definition of corruption has been one coined by J. J. Senaria for the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, published in 1931: "The misuse of public power for private profit." This, however, is relevant to the receiver rather than to the payer.

In the latter case, Professor Wesley Cragg, writing in a recent issue of the *International Journal* (Canadian Institute of Public Affairs), has offered: "Any attempt to persuade someone in a position of responsibility to make a decision or recommendation on any grounds other than the intrinsic merits of the case."

In the United States it is a crime under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (1977) to bribe a public official from another country; and presumably the Justice Department will now be looking closely at Salt Lake City's bid for the 2002 Winter Olympics and perhaps Atlanta's earlier success also.

The OECD's Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials, which will have a similar effect in participant countries including the UK, does not come into force until February 15, 1999.

Meanwhile the President of the Australian Olympic Association is quoted (*The Sunday Times*, January 24) as saying, in relation to large cash payments made to the Kenyan and Ugandan Olympic Committees: "My view was that it might encourage them to consider their votes for

Sydney." If that is not corruption, what is?

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE MOODY-STUART
(Chairman),
Transparency International (UK),
St Nicholas House, St Nicholas Road,
Sutton, Surrey SM1 1EL,
January 25

From the Chairman of The Olympians

Sir, Mr Juan Antonio Samaranch may plead ignorance of the corruption within his International Olympic Committee, but he cannot walk away from the fact that he personally set the parameters for Olympic profligacy.

We are told that he expects a strenuous limousine for even the shortest of journeys, that he will seldom use public transport but expects private helicopters, aircraft and even trains to be available for him to reach the best suite in the finest hotel in any city that is hosting his visit.

This grandiose lifestyle has inevitably sent strong messages to his colleagues and minions within the IOC, many of whom have come to regard the Olympic Movement as a gravy-train and act accordingly.

What we need now is an IOC President who exhibits a more humble and restrained approach to the development of the Olympic ethos.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN DISLEY,
Chairman, The Olympians,
Hampton House,
Upper Sunbury Road,
Hampton, Middlesex TW12 2DW,
January 25

Airport at Aldeburgh

From Mr Yann Borgstedt

Sir, The letter from the chief executive of Aldeburgh Productions and others about an airport three miles from Snape Maltings at Bentwaters (January 21) was long on emotion but short on information.

The US military airfield at Bentwaters co-existed happily with the Maltings for many years. There is no reason why that cannot happen again. We have told the new chief executive we would very much like to work with him to achieve that.

We are, after all, talking about a local airport with projections of ten commercial flights a day in ten years' time, using quiet, modern aircraft which will hardly be heard at The Maltings above the background noise of daily life.

Aldeburgh Town Council, which is equally concerned about the success of the festival, has no reservations about our plan to regenerate a derelict eyecore, creating 2,000 jobs with homes on the doorstep, while restoring local health and woodland. They have voted 11-2 in favour of our proposal.

After all we are not proposing

something new. The principle of continuing aviation at Bentwaters has been well established since 1993 by government-appointed inspectors, the county council and the district council, partly in recognition of the fact that Suffolk is now the only English county without a commercial airport.

Yours faithfully,
YANN BORGSTEDT
(Project Manager),
Anglia International Airport,
Rendlesham, Suffolk IP12 2RJ,
January 21

From Mr Lewis Benjamin

Sir, It's been a long while since I have read such an OTT and self-important squawk of pointless panic as from the "names" at Aldeburgh. They should be ashamed of themselves for associating with such nimbyism.

All that is required is for what little traffic there's ever likely to be from Bentwaters to avoid Snape. Even Joan Sutherland at full throttle couldn't be heard from three miles away.

Yours in disbelief,
LEWIS BENJAMIN,
17 Brown Court, Westfields,
Ashby de la Zouch LE65 2LZ,
January 21

Thatcher on leadership

From Mr Kenneth Harris

Sir, Magnus Linklater, in his most stimulating column, "A hole at the heart of this parliament" (January 21), recalls, with approval, the now famous words of Margaret Thatcher, "you've got to have a togetherness, a unity in your Cabinet", and her belief in a Cabinet composed only of "the people who want to go in the direction which every instinct tells me we have to go. Clearly, steadily, firmly, with resolution".

Mr Linklater states that this courageous utterance was made "early in Thatcher's first administration". In fact, she made it (to me, in an interview for *The Observer*) several weeks before the 1979 election, which many thought she would lose, at the head of a much divided party, most of whose leaders strongly disapproved of her view on how to run governments, some fearing her airing of their might cost them the election.

Yours etc,
KENNETH HARRIS,
45 Molyneux Street,
London W1H 5HW,
January 21

Problem shelved

From Mrs Imogen Mottram

Sir, Unable to find any tins of tomatoes in the canned vegetables section of a supermarket in Aberdeen (letters, January 18 and 20) I was directed to the Italian section, marked "Foreign Foods".

Yours sincerely,
IMOGEN MOTTRAM,
15 Freewaters Close, Ickleford,
Nr Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 3TQ,
January 21

From Mr M. J. J. Tanner

Sir, Whilst in Normandy last summer, I found Bisto gravy powder in a hardware shop on the same shelf as colouring for the gown.

And in a small town near Oslo, a number of years ago, I saw Finlud fish fingers in a freezer selling frozen cat food.

Yours sincerely,
M. J. J. TANNER,
2 Highfield Road,
Worthing, West Sussex BN13 1PX,
January 20

Tone of Sir Paul's call to parents

From Mrs Jenny Anderson

Sir, I am more offended by Sir Paul McCartney's message to parents (report and advertisement, January 25) than by his late wife's use of the F-word in her new single.

His sarcastic and mocking tone would more become a cocky, teenage pop star who is in the throes of youthful rebellion than an ageing one whose remarks should be tempered by his years and the responsibilities of parenthood. For shame, Sir Paul.

Yours,
JENNIFER ANDERSON,
6 Hailey Lane, Herford SG13 7NX.
janderson@globalnet.co.uk
January 25

From Mr Rodney Gray

Sir, Your newspaper today contains a half-page advertisement by Sir Paul McCartney, but no address to which one may reply.

I hold Sir Paul in the highest regard. I am a great admirer of his work and that of his late wife, and I felt enormous sympathy with him when she died. I can accept, too, his views about the words to which he refers and that in many areas today they are in common use. I wonder if he can accept, however, that there are those to whom they give great offence.

I for one have no wish to hear them on my radio or television, even though I am about the same age as Sir Paul.

While I fully support the rights of those who wish to buy the record and hear the lyrics, I also fully support those who seek to avoid giving offence to me and countless others by not bringing the words into my home.

Yours sincerely,
RODNEY GRAY,
Homefield, Hordean,
Berkwick upon Tweed TD15 1JX,
January 25

Baths at Qumran

From Mr Robert Feather

Sir, Ms Gloria Moss, in her article in *Faith and Freedom* on the so-called "1st-century health spa" at Qumran (report, January 18), appears to ignore the evidence that the main activity of the community of Essenes at Qumran was prayer and devotion to holy texts.

Similar immersion baths to those at Qumran (which is not in Jordan, as you report, but in Israel) have been found elsewhere in Israel, and the community's writings make it clear that extreme cleanliness and ritual washing was essential to their way of life — hence the large number of baths. The community did have secrets. It is true, but these related to things other than medicines.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT FEATHER,
35 Baxendale, Whestone, N20 0EG.

Golden years

From Dr Julia Leach

Sir, I have long believed that middle age (letters, January 5, 12 and 19) is ten years older than me, and old age is ten years older than my parents.

Yours faithfully,
JULIA LEACH,
The Lodge, Sandy Lane,
Old Lakenham, Norwich NR1 2NR.

From Mr Bob Capon

Sir, I always understood that 40 is the old age of youth and 50 the youth of old age.

Yours faithfully,
R. W. CAPON,
54 Ridgeway Crescent,
Orpington, Kent BR6 9QP,
January 22

From Mr Henry R. Magrill

Sir, Perhaps the best late 20th-century definition of middle age is: "Too old to be a toy boy and too young to be a sugar daddy".

Yours faithfully,
HENRY R. MAGRILL,
Flat 6, 7 Cleveland Gardens, W2 6HA.
magrill@cclard.net
January 19

Time warp

From Mr Ivan K. Rowland

Sir, I seem to recall that the esteemed film critic Mr Barry Norman referred to the film *2010* as "ten past eight" (letter, January 19).

Yours faithfully,
IVAN K. ROWLAND,
59 Coddington Hill, SE23 1LR,
January 19

Heavenly bliss

From Mrs Janet Kingston

Sir, Dr Stuttaford states in his article on Viagra (Medical briefing, January 22), "there is no sex in the graveyard".

Any vicar, vicar's wife, vergar, sexton, etc. would tell him that there is usually evidence to the contrary in most graveyards. I suspect my husband has often baptised a baby conceived within a few yards of the font.

Yours faithfully,
JANET KINGSTON,
8 Pengilly Road, Farnham GU9 7XQ.
roykingston@lineone.net
January 22

OBITUARIES

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES DUNPHIE

Major-General Sir Charles Dunphie, CB, CBE, DSO, Chairman of Vickers, 1962-67, died on January 7 aged 96. He was born on April 20, 1902.

Charles Dunphie had three careers: as a Gunner, as a commander of armoured forces and as an industrialist. He hit the headlines in the Second World War during the Tunisian campaign, when his 26th Armoured Brigade was rushed down from northern Tunisia, and succeeded in checking Rommel's breakthrough at the Kasserine Pass after the rest of the US 2nd Corps in southern Tunisia in February 1943.

The son of Sir Alfred Dunphie, a director of Coutts Bank and one-time assistant treasurer to Queen Alexandra, Charles Dunphie was educated at the Royal Naval College at Osborne and Dartmouth during the First World War. He intended to make his career in the Royal Navy but when the war ended the Navy re-instituted its pre-war standards for eyesight (relaxed since 1914) and he

failed the new eye test. He was instead offered a place at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, or at Sandhurst.

He chose Woolwich and was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1921. His early service was mostly with Royal Field Artillery and Royal Horse Artillery batteries in India and England.

His career as a Gunner came to an end in 1937. In 1938 he was posted to the new experimental Mobile Division on Salisbury Plain and was thereafter involved in armoured warfare and tank development, initially with the British Expeditionary Force in France between 1939 and 1940.

In 1941 he was promoted Brigadier, Royal Armoured Corps, at General Sir Alan Brooke's GHQ Home Forces, responsible for the deployment of armoured formations as they were raised to defend England from invasion. When the German threat faded and thoughts were turning to offensive operations, he was given command of 20th Armoured Brigade. He was not destined to take it into action: he was transferred instead to

command 26th Armoured Brigade which was nominated, as part of 6th Armoured Division, to be the leading British armoured formation in the Allied landings in French North Africa in November 1942.

In February 1943 the American *cir de coeur* from the Kasserine Pass brought his brigade southwards to help the US 2nd Corps. Recommitting the pass personally on February 20, when the Afrika Korps assault group was attacking it, he realised that the American defence was falling apart. He ordered his motor battalion group — under Lieutenant-Colonel Adrian Gore — forward into a delaying position just north of the pass, while the rest of his brigade took up a defensive position some miles behind it, ready to block Rommel's thrust into the rear of the Allied line.

The American defence did collapse, but Dunphie's brigade fought the 10th Panzer Division to a standstill before it could reach the important town of Thala. Rommel, realising that there was no quick victory to be had at Kasserine, gave

up and withdrew southwards to strike at Montgomery's Eighth Army, which had entered Tunisia and was threatening his rear. Dunphie was awarded the DSO for his action in blocking the vital Kasserine-Thala road.

General Sir Harold Alexander, who had just arrived to take command of the Tunisian front, decided that something must be done quickly to improve the handling of American formations. He persuaded General Patton, who had taken over the defeated US 2nd Corps, to accept British officers on a temporary basis in his corps, divisional and combat command headquarters. Dunphie became his Assistant Chief of Staff for the rest of the campaign, getting on extremely well with him and his staff. He was wounded and awarded the US Silver Star, but knew nothing about the award until he later met Patton, who noticed that he was not wearing the ribbon. Patton had his own cut off and pinned on Dunphie's battletress.

Dunphie returned to England in June 1943 to become deputy director of the Royal Armoured Corps in

the War Office, where he was closely involved in armoured fighting vehicle development. He was a natural choice for the appointment of Director General of Fighting Vehicles in the Ministry of Supply at the end of the war. It was then but a short step into his third career as an industrialist.

In 1948 he was headhunted by Vickers, becoming managing director in 1956 and going on to be chairman from 1962 to 1967. He was on the boards of several other companies associated with the armaments industry, and also of the Westminster Bank and Royal Exchange Assurance. He ended his industrial career as chairman of English Steel. He was knighted for his services to British industry in 1989, and he was a member of Her Majesty's Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms, 1962-62.

His first marriage was in 1931 to Eileen, daughter of Lieutenant-General Sir Walter Campbell. After she died in 1978, he married in 1981 Susan, widow of Colonel P. L. M. Wright. She and the son and daughter of his first marriage survive him.



Dunphie to the rescue of the Americans at the Kasserine Pass in 1943

JOHN HARRISON

John Harrison, prison governor, died of lung cancer on December 26 aged 55. He was born on June 15, 1943.

THE past three decades have been especially difficult in the Prison Service. Overcrowding, escapes, riots, staff industrial action and resource shortages combined to make the task of John Harrison's generation of prison governors extremely daunting. Surviving from one day to the next without disaster was too often the priority; improving establishments frequently appeared near impossible. Yet, despite this background, Harrison succeeded in keeping the establishments he governed on an even keel.

His father, Mr. H. Harrison, had been Governor of North Sea Camp, Brixton in Lincolnshire, and then Governor, Class 2 of the larger Portland Boreston in Dorset. During his career, the Harrison family moved quite frequently between prison quarters; generally close to establishments. Working par-



Harrison: a flair for getting through to staff and prisoners

ties of offenders were frequently in evidence, so John grew up accustomed to offenders and to penal establishments.

This stood him in good stead when he entered the Prison Service in 1969. He was always very proud of his family links with the service: for him it was never just a job. A big man, he played rugby for years, and was an England trialist. His sporting prowess, which extended far

beyond rugby, helped him to build relationships with both staff and prisoners. He was a man's man, quick-witted, with a great sense of humour and a gift for telling stories, all of which led to his being liked right across the prison community.

A tough fighter for issues he regarded as important, he had a flair for getting his message across to both staff and prisoners. But he was also a very

private man, with considerable inner strengths, especially noticeable in the way he coped with his final illness.

John Louis Harrison was born in St Albans. He attended Rochdale, Maidstone and Hampton Grammar Schools. On leaving school in 1961, he joined a firm of estate agents in Boston, Lincolnshire, which fostered a lifelong interest in antiques and collectibles. His rugby in this period included playing against the touring Springboks in 1969. It was also during this time that he met Christine Smith, whom he married in 1971.

In 1969, while teaching part-time at North Sea Camp, he was approached by the Governor, Michael Selby, who suggested that he might follow in his father's footsteps and join the Prison Service. After selection and training he was posted back to North Sea Camp, where one of his first jobs was to supervise a work party charged with demolishing the old brick-lined quarter that he had lived in as a boy. His potential was quickly

recognised and in September 1970 he joined the staff course at the Prison Service College, Wakefield, on promotion to assistant governor. Afterwards he was posted to Morton Hall, Lincolnshire, and then Huntercombe in Oxfordshire, both small Borstal institutions. Promotion to governor came in 1978, and he moved to Rochester Borstal, a reflection of his ability in work with young offenders.

In 1982, to widen his experience, he was transferred to the South East regional office. This was a time of acute population pressure, resulting in prisoners overflowing into police cells, causing considerable political embarrassment. Managing incidents and the consequences of staff strikes was also part of Harrison's brief, and he proved very good at these demanding tasks and reliable under pressure. He was soon selected for promotion to Governor Class 3 and posted to Wandsworth Prison as deputy governor, his first experience of working with adult prisoners.

Further promotion to Governor Class 2 quickly followed, and he was then given responsibility for overseeing all the young offender and women's establishments in the South East. This was the time of the introduction of "Fresh Start", a radical change to staff conditions, and Harrison quickly gained the respect of his governor colleagues.

He was given his first command in 1990, when he took charge of the Young Offender Institution at Stoke Heath in Shropshire. In 1991, he transferred to Canterbury Prison, bringing him much closer to his home in Surrey. Prison populations were growing very fast as a consequence of Michael Howard's "prison works" policy. Canterbury took its share of the increase, and Harrison's priority was maintaining stability.

He was especially pleased to be selected for further promotion to Governor Class 1 in 1994, and after a short spell in charge of Frankland Maximum Security Prison near Durham and some months working on policy at Prison Service HQ, he took charge of Risley Prison in Cheshire in 1995.

Risley was a complex and unusual prison with a difficult history, but he largely succeeded in maintaining its positive regime in the face of severe budget reductions. This took all his skill and determination, and involved difficult negotiations with local trade unions. He also laid the foundations for an important initiative to tackle drug offending, something he was still developing when his final illness overcame him.

John Harrison leaves a widow, Christine, and two sons and two daughters.

THEO MATHEW

Theo Mathew, Windsor Herald at the College of Arms, 1978-97, died on December 24 aged 56. He was born on April 7, 1942.

AS ONE of the royal heralds Theo Mathew took part annually in the State Opening of Parliament, and the Garter Service at Windsor Castle. These were roles he greatly enjoyed, as he had a certain weakness for uniforms and decorations, which is not unknown in his profession.

State ceremonial is the most public aspect of the work of the heralds but the far greater part of their time is devoted to heraldic and genealogical research, entering pedigrees in the College of Arms registers, overseeing heraldic artwork and designing new coats of arms, of which about 180 are granted each year. The dry tasks of drawing up pedigrees and making searches in the college records did not always prove sufficiently diverting for Mathew's imaginative mind. Besides ceremonial, it was the creation of new arms which gave him the greatest pleasure. He would never delegate the preparation of sketches of proposed arms to a college artist but drew them himself with often painstaking attention but, as he was the first to admit, variable results.

Theo Mathew was born in London, the son of Robert Mathew, and Joan, elder daughter of Sir George Young, 4th Baronet. He was educated at Downside and Balliol, where he read history.

An early false start to his career provided a sharp contrast to his family's previous distinction in the legal profession — a contrast which he viewed with a characteristically perverse pride and amusement.

His great-grandfather, Sir James Mathew, was, as he would often relate, a Lord Justice of Appeal; his grandfather, another Theobald Mathew, a recorder, and the author of four volumes of *Forensic Fables*; his father a solicitor; and the young Theo for a period an article clerk with Frere Cholmeley.

Not finding the law to his liking he went to work as a research assistant to Sir Anthony Wagner, then Garter King of Arms, whose protégé he became. He served as a Green Staff Officer at the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969 and was appointed Rouge Dragon Pursuivant the following year. He relinquished that office when advanced to Windsor Herald in 1978, with some relief, musing that at only 5ft 6in tall he failed to meet expectations of appearance, and that Rouge Dragon should be at least 6ft 6in with a thick growth of bright ginger hair.

Theo Mathew was a bachelor of modest private means, and of generally simple but occasionally extravagant and romantic tastes. A portrait of a 19th-century member of his family, Father Theobald Mathew, the Irish "Apostle of Temperance", gesturing towards gushing water, dominated the drawing room of his house in St John's Wood.

While the young Theo Mathew was far from puritanical, and was always the most generous and convivial of hosts, he could not rival another family member, General Montague Mathew, who died at a dinner party in 1819, and is remembered for being one of the last "four-bottle men" in Co Tipperary.

The Mathew seat, Thomastown Castle in Co Tipperary, passed out of family owner-

ship in the 19th century and fell into ruin. In 1938 it was bought back by David Mathew, the historian and titular Archbishop of Apamea in Bythnia, and was eventually passed by him to his kinsman Theo, whom he made his heir. Later, Theo, although often staying with cousins in Dublin, rarely found time to visit what has been described as "one of the most spectacular of all the many ruined Gothic castles in Ireland".

Capable of finding the comic side of virtually any situation, Theo Mathew was a rich source of amusing anecdote. His sharp eye noticed the finest nuances of voice and accent, and this, combined with remarkable powers of mimicry, allowed him to tell any tale with a full range of appropriate voices.

Perhaps in part due to a similarity in stature his most perfect imitation was that of the present Duke of Norfolk who, by virtue of holding the hereditary office of Earl Marshal, has powers of supervision over the College of Arms. Often the Earl Marshal's military reverberation round the college libraries, causing consternation and the assumption that he was making an unannounced visit. But nearly always this would turn out to be "only Theo".

Realising that he did not have the dedication to his profession necessary to secure further advancement he watched stoically as more earnest colleagues were promoted over him. He inspired great affection and was a warm-hearted and faithful friend. In 1997 he retired from the College of Arms and moved to West Mersea in Essex, the scene of many happy childhood holidays.



Theo Mathew, Windsor Herald, seated right, with the other heralds at the State Opening of Parliament in November 1981

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LEGAL NOTICES

NatWest appoints 93 area franchise managers



Stern: growth in Europe

By Rodney Hobson

NATWEST BANK has consolidated its position as the leading bank providing services to franchising by appointing a network of franchise managers located around the country.

Some of the 93 new area franchise managers will be at the National Franchise Exhibition at the G-Mex Centre, Manchester, next week. NatWest will retain its head office staff of eight, under Peter Stern, who has been head of franchising for 16 years. He said the network, intended to

cover the whole of England, Scotland and Wales, had been developed in response to the continued growth of franchising in the UK. Recruiting has taken place over the past nine months.

Mr Stern said: "The introduction of our new franchise managers is another positive step in helping new and existing customers to succeed in this growth area. Franchising is big business, accounting for a fifth of all UK retail sales. Not only is franchising taking off in the UK — in Europe we are seeing rapid growth. That is why last year we went into partner-

ship with four leading European banks."

NatWest is currently compiling its annual survey in conjunction with the British Franchise Association. Results will be published in March. Last year franchising turnover was reported at £7 billion, with 568 franchise systems operating 29,100 outlets and employing 273,800 people.

Total franchise turnover in Europe is estimated at more than £60 billion, with more than 3,800 franchises operating 167,000 franchised outlets and employing 1.5 million people.

CJI, the organiser of the G-Mex exhibition on February 5 and 6, reports that 75 stands have been booked. They include Signs Express, which will begin its 1999 recruitment campaign at the event.

David Corbett, managing director of Signs Express, said: "We believe there are significant opportunities for signage business, especially in the North of England, where we would like to open more outlets."

Also taking part will be Kall Kwit, the print and design franchise, which achieved total turnover of

more than £70 million last year. CJI also organises annual franchise exhibitions at Wembley and in Glasgow.

Miller Freeman, organiser of the franchise exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, said that 11,224 visitors attended the event last October.

It is the first time that the attendance has been audited independently by ABC. The figure excludes organisers, NEC personnel and re-entries.

Futurekids, one of the fastest-growing franchises in the country, will be taking a stand at Manches-

ter. It provides computer literacy training for children, adults and teachers and already operates in 75 countries, training 100,000 children a year.

It was founded in Los Angeles in 1983 on the premise that learning computer skills would be as important as learning to read and write. In Britain, it works in partnership with the Institute of Education, the University of London, the Joint Examining Board and, in hospital schools, the National Association for the Education of Sick Children.

Signs point to prospect of growth

By Rodney Hobson

AN EVER-GROWING list of franchises, many in areas not previously covered by franchise systems, is on offer to would-be entrepreneurs.

A new franchise has been set up to service and manage estate agency "For Sale" signs. Called Agency Express, it offers estate agency chains and independent operators a cost-effective method for erecting, servicing and removing property signs.

There are about 1/4 million "For Sale" boards outside properties in Britain at any one time. Fewer than half of all properties on the market had boards outside ten years ago. Now the figure is almost 80 per cent.

Despite indications that the housing market could slow down along with the rest of the economy, Agency Express is stepping up its search for franchisees across the country. It claims that when the market is depressed and it is difficult to sell houses, a greater percentage of properties on the market have sale signs outside.

In addition, Agency Express said it has spotted lucrative new opportunities for shorter-term signs including homes for rent and commercial properties for leasing. The franchise system is an offshoot of Signs Express, which is based in Nor-

wich and now has 65 outlets. The initial cost of an Agency Express franchise is £9,950, which includes a ten-year agreement, the deposit on a van and specialist equipment.

After the success of pilot operations last year, Wicked Wheels is ready to recruit two franchisees a month. An investment costs £25,000. Wicked Wheels is a mobile alloy wheels refurbishment service designed to make corroded and damaged wheels look like new.

Stephen Wood, of Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, spent £300,000 and two years developing mobile equipment that can shoblast, repair, repaint and relacquar alloy wheels from cars, vans and motorcycles.

Mr Wood said: "Car dealers and fleet managers can add hundreds of pounds to the value of their used vehicles by bringing them back to 'as new'. It is an easy message to sell in a market that we have already proven with our sister franchise, business Paint Technik." The service is also aimed at classic car specialists. The cost is about £30 a wheel.

Prospective franchisees ought to check out any franchise system and if possible talk to existing franchisees before signing up. New franchise systems should have run a pilot project.



Class of their own: ex-teachers David and Julie Mitchell prefer handbells to school bells

Husband and wife are crying good team

Bernard Silk
meets a couple
who rang the
changes to be
town criers

DAVID and Julie Mitchell claim to be the world's first husband-and-wife team of town criers.

Both former teachers, they find running their own business more congenial than the classroom these days.

Mr Mitchell had arranged for a town crier to waken his wife-to-be with a bellowed proclamation outside her window on their wedding day in 1989.

The crier cried off — he was double-booked — so Mr Mitchell borrowed his spare bell and robes and did the job himself.

"I thought it was fun," he says. "I began to deputise as a town crier on a part-time basis in Chester and soon became a town crier in my own right in some surrounding towns."

He left teaching in 1992 and combined a new career in calligraphy — in which he produces bespoke wedding invitations, town-twining charters, official documents, poems and certificates — with being a town crier.

Now he and Mrs Mitchell are the official town criers in Chester. From May to August, they declaim in the town five days a week. They welcome tourists in up to eight languages and boom forth local histories and announcements, and they have been hired to do six public proposals of marriage, all of which were accepted.

The couple have taken part in town crier competitions, winning trophies all over Brit-

ain, and in Australia and Canada. So, what does the aspiring town crier need?

"You must have confidence and a loud voice — but not simply to shout like a sergeant-major," says Mr Mitchell. "You have to modulate your delivery and be prepared to be spontaneous. And you must have great legs to wear the tights."

The outfit does not come cheap. It costs from about £1,500 and it is a false economy to skimp, the couple say. Fortunately, Mrs Mitchell has another skill. She makes liveries for town criers and recently received an order from a town in Victoria, Australia.

The cost, which is made of pure wool and trimmed with gold lace, may take 100 hours to complete and costs £750. A hat and bell might cost £50 apiece.

Even with all their sidelines, Mr Mitchell finds time to give an after-dinner presentation, entitled "For crying out loud", at £120 a time. The couple's annual turnover is a comparatively

modest £22,500 because the employment is mainly seasonal.

They charge a minimum of £40 for a turnout in the Chester area. Long-distance jobs may cost several hundred pounds, subject to negotiation, with the client paying travel costs. The couple work together and solo.

Mrs Mitchell says that you need to be a combination of an entertainer and a civic official, adding: "You can't be a wimp because you have to deal with comments and quips from the crowd, sometimes taking the mickey, in an interesting and amusing way. In the business, it's called conviviality and public friendliness. You have to take to people because they constantly approach you."

Town criers go back into the mists of time. They told the populace about news, impending visits of royalty, and deaths of local people and gave warning of floods and epidemics. Nowadays there are about 150 town criers in the UK, most employed on an occasional basis. About 10 per cent of town criers are women, and they take part on an equal basis in competitions against their male counterparts.

"Last year's runner-up world champion was a woman," said Mrs Mitchell, "and in 1997 the loudest declaimers in a competition came from a woman crier."

David and Julie Mitchell are on 01244 311736.

Town centres get smart to win back shoppers

A SMARTCARD has been introduced to win shoppers back to town centres, where independent businesses have complained for years about unfair competition from supermarkets (Rodney Hobson writes).

The card is already in use in more than 150 shops in Nottingham.

Paul Ashley, managing director of Touch, a London company that has developed the card first in Nottingham at the city council's invitation, said: "Our aim is to bring customers back into high streets and fight out-of-town hypermarkets."

Although the Nottingham signatories include big businesses such as Ravel and Knickerbox, most are small independent companies. These have been more prompt in their dealings with the card issuer.

"It is easier to get a decision from the small company," said Mr Ashley. "The matter does



Knickerbox has already signed up for smartcards

not have to be referred to anybody else."

Card users in Nottingham receive a 2 per cent discount on purchases and savings of up to 10 per cent at the city council's indoor leisure centres.

A participating business receives a free list of all cardhold-

ers from Touch but pays for research data, such as the age bracket of its customers, so that it can market similar shoppers. Touch is about to issue the card in Maidstone, Kent, and is in discussions to start a scheme in Bristol. Studies of the possibility of a card are to be carried out in Manchester and Cambridge, and sights have been set on Southampton, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Oxford, Norwich, Coventry, Wolverhampton, and Tamworth, Staffordshire, and Southend, Essex.

John Lang Wootton, the property consultancy, is in talks with two unnamed London districts on regeneration of their centres. The consultancy has previously advised other towns and cities, including Leeds and Newcastle upon Tyne. The adviser aims for a mix of shops, restaurants and leisure establishments and recommends policies to make town centres safe, clean, accessible and pleasurable to visit.

John McSherry, a partner in the firm's shopping centre management team, said: "We try to bring together the local authority, the landowners and all interested parties to improve town centres."

So many small companies complain that recruiting is time-consuming and expensive that a free service, in which applicants take a job on a three-week trial, has been started in South London.

The service, Working Advantage, set up by the Employment Service and Solotec, the area's training and enterprise council, brings employer and applicant together without charge.

However, the jobseeker works unpaid for the three-week trial and retains all social security payments under an agreement with the Benefits Agency. If the applicant is taken on permanently, Working Advantage pays the employer £300 to cover expenses. Working Advantage may also make a contribution to the cost of any training scheme undertaken by the new employee. Inquiries: 0800 800222.

Small businesses and small customers are among the slowest payers of invoices, according to the latest quarterly survey by the Institute of Credit Management. Very large businesses and central government are also culprits, the institute says. Firms in a long-term relationship tend to pay quickly. The survey found that cash-flow was the main reason for late payment, followed by intentional late payment.

A trade mission to the Philippines has been organised for May 3 to 7 by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Cost of the package is £1,070. Inquiries: 0121 450 4205.

The Federation of Small Businesses marks its 25th anniversary with its annual conference at Blackpool, near to Lytham St Anne's, where the organisation was formed. Michael Wills, the new Small Firms Minister, will put in an appearance and the main business speaker is Sir Christopher Harding, president of the Prince's Youth Business Trust. The conference, on March 19 to 21, will be attended by more than 500 delegates.

Radar homes in on smallest employers

By Brian Collett

A CONFERENCE has been called by the charity Radar to encourage small businesses to employ disabled people.

Many of the businesses targeted by Radar — the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation — have fewer than 15 staff and are not covered by the legislation on employing disabled people.

Radar will offer specific advice for businesses and will detail the kind of "reasonable adjustments" that the legislation stipulates should be made to accommodate disabled employees. "This may

be as simple as giving somebody time off for physiotherapy," said Nick Goss, Radar's education, training and employment officer.

He believes that operating and monitoring a policy on disabled employees is easier in a business with a small staff. Allowing staff to work from home could also be easier to monitor.

The conference is at the Royal College of Physicians on April 19. Small business organisations as well as employers have been invited. Inquiries: 0171 250 3222.

Hospitality jobs to soar

EMPLOYMENT in London's hotel and catering business will rise at four times the capital's average employment growth rate over the next two years, a report issued today says (Brian Collett writes).

Yet this sector has the highest number of employers reporting shortages of skilled staff. The report, drawn up by the London Skills Forecasting

Unit, highlights the difficulties that small firms have in recruiting and training staff. The unit was formed by the London Tech Council, the umbrella body for the capital's seven training and enterprise councils.

The researchers say that manufacturing has the worst training record in London. Only 31 per cent of employers gave their workforce training

last year. The best record was in financial services, with 79 per cent giving training.

The aim of the report, the first produced by the unit, is to show further and higher education establishments, Tecs and employers the training needed to staff London businesses and to enable people to find work. It is funded by the Tecs and the European Commission.

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I'm hoarding for the recession

A two-page special report on Charter Mark, the scheme that is breeding a new culture in many of our public institutions

Top marks for serving with pride

It has not been a particularly happy new year for the public services. The influenza that swept through Britain highlighted the pressure under which much of the NHS operates. The Brantley affair reawakened concerns over adoption. Meat inspectors threatened to strike. Tony Blair expressed concern about inner-city schools. There were serious revelations about the Flying Squad. All of this suggested that there are serious weaknesses in some of our most important public institutions.

But do these headline stories typify the public service as a whole? Is every hospital brought to a halt by winter flu? Are all schools in turmoil? And what do headlines mean for the less high-profile services — libraries, leisure centres, engineers and post offices — which nevertheless play an important part in our daily lives? The Charter Mark awards announced today — bestowed by the Government on 1,200 organisations — go some way to restoring the balance. First awarded by John Major, the Charter Mark has been continued and expanded by Labour to recognise quality in the public service, encourage improvement and provide models of good practice.

But, significantly, the Charter Mark is not about money. As one winner put it: "High standards don't depend on funding alone. When put to the test, we are forced to examine how we use the money we have got. More inventive management, better communications with users and clearer standards can all help to lift the calibre of delivery without



Awarded for excellence

extra costs." Many of this year's recipients are receiving the award for the second time. To qualify, they have had to show that they have made significant improvements since they last entered.

In the Derbyshire Dales Locality Health Services, the past three years have seen improved communications with the district general hospital, better co-operation with local carer and user groups and an overhaul of nursing documentation to increase efficiency. Strengthened by these improvements, the health services also managed to cope with the winter crisis by adopting a local action plan.

Underpinning these advances has been the dedication of staff. Ian Rogerson, the locality general manager, says: "Staff have been coming in to do extra work at a time when there has been a very high level of staff sickness. We cannot expect them to do this as a matter of course, but in an emergency the staff rally round. Their dedication has been impressive."

Ms B.J. Walther, who runs the outpatients department at the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Trust, believes that the Charter Mark scheme is changing the ethos within the public

service and particularly within the NHS. "It has helped to make us much more aware of the patients and their point of view," she says.

The tradition within the NHS has been that everything revolves around the consultants. Charter Mark is starting to put the patient at the centre of the service. Ms Walther believes that the process of entering for the award is worthwhile in its own right. "The principles are very simple, very clear and we ought to be working towards them in any case. By entering for a Charter Mark, you gain the benefit of an objective external audit of your service and valuable feedback from the Cabinet Office. What's more, it is free. To get a similar service from an external consultant would cost thousands of pounds."

Ms Walther has used the Charter Mark scheme as a development tool for her hospital. For example, it helped to inspire the launch of a regular newsletter for outpatients. When the flu epidemic struck, the hospital used the newsletter to explain what was happening and to ask users to be patient. It helped people to cope with the crisis.

Charter Mark is gaining gradual recognition from the public as a mark of quality. Significantly, the change of heart among Labour-controlled local authorities — many of whom had initially boycotted it as a piece of Conservative sleight of hand — means that Charter Mark has become acceptable across the political divide. Its place in society now looks secure.

EDWARD FENNELL



Chiltern Railways has invested more than £30 million to improve services, as well as installing CCTV to increase security at car parks

Pressure breeds success

John Young profiles some of the winners who have quietly made improvements in their field

The list of this year's award winners provides a reminder both of the variety of public services in Britain and of the potential for improvement.

The successful entrants represent sectors currently under intense critical scrutiny such as hospitals, schools and railways: there are those from more consumer-orientated areas such as tourist information and the provision of sports facilities.

There are even organisations such as the Inland Revenue and prisons. In the case of the latter, there is undoubtedly scope for improvement, but progress is not always easy to measure.

In Sunderland, the City Hospitals NHS Trust has won its fourth Charter Mark despite staff shortages. Nurses from South Africa have been recruited to ease the problem. The day case unit now treats nearly two thirds of the hospital's patients, enabling them to return home on the day of their operation.

The eye infirmary and the neurophysiology department, which provides a high-quality

mobile service, have both been re-accredited.

The Sir Winston Churchill Comprehensive School in Woking, Surrey, with a student population of about 1,500, is seeking to re-establish the sixth form it lost in the Seventies. The Government's Schools Inspectorate puts it among the top 160 schools in Britain.

Michael Staples, the school's pastoral manager, points to its "tracking system" which allows pupils' exam results to be fed into a computer before being used to assess whether they are doing well.

Holy Cross High School in Chorley, Lancashire, has introduced "Going for Gold" awards to stimulate achievement in lessons and in sport, and to boost attendance and extracurricular activities such as volunteer work for charities. Under the school's monitoring system, individual tutors are assigned to pupils experiencing difficulties.

Parklands Junior School, in

Romford, Essex, has already been awarded Investors in People status. Gina Gardiner, the principal, sees a Charter Mark as a natural progression, attributing the school's success to its emphasis on high standards and on teamwork involving staff, pupils, parents and the community.

The Land Registry, which oversees 24 district offices from its headquarters in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, holds the records of more than 16 million titles, most of which are now stored on computer. It has recently introduced a pilot scheme for a national land information service, and hopes to revolutionise homebuying by introducing computer conveyancing to cut out expensive searches. This is the third successive year in which the registry has been awarded a Charter Mark.

James Pearson, the deputy head of information, says reaching such heights gets harder all the time. "We must demonstrate consistently improving standards," he says. "It is not enough to stand still."

One of the things that impressed the assessors was our independent complaints procedure. "Although as a monopoly, which the public is forced to use, we are not subject to market forces, we are nonetheless very customer-orientated and are constantly developing and improving our services."

Since privatisation, most of the railway companies have been under fire almost as consistently as was their predecessor, British Rail. Happily, there are some exceptions.

Since 1994, Chiltern Railways has invested more than £30 million on its Chiltern trains to provide faster, more comfortable journeys on a network once notorious for overcrowding and unreliability. It offers a 50 per cent refund to passengers delayed for more than 30 minutes. Assessors were also impressed by the friendliness and efficiency of staff, and by the quality and amount of information available in timetables and leaflets.

The Island Line Train Operating Company on the Isle of

Wight is the smallest of the 25 franchised operators, responsible for just 8½ miles of track between Ryde and Shanklin. Its rolling stock is 60 years old and the 35 staff are responsible for track maintenance as well as running the trains (all but two of the stations are unmanned). Nonetheless, it carries 700,000 passengers a year, 50 per cent of them tourists. Remarkably, the company achieves 95 per cent punctuality. "A lot of good news goes unreported," says Alan Crannell, the general manager. "We decided we had achieved enough to apply for an award."

In South Yorkshire, the Passenger Transport Executive has concentrated on replacing cold, bleak waiting rooms with integrated rail and bus interchanges.

The Rotherham Interchange — near the railway station in the town centre, opened in 1996 — provides a bus station, car park, information centre and a shopping area.

A similar interchange in Barnsley, opened in 1992, which incorporates the railway station, is to be expanded to encompass the adjacent bus station, formerly privately owned. A similar project is planned for Doncaster.

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CHARTER MARK Winners



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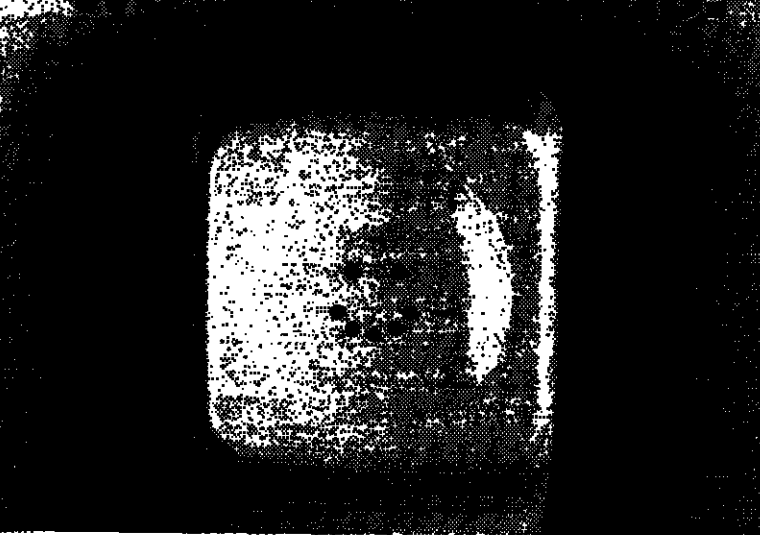
to 5 Contributions Agency regions on their Chartermark award 26/1/1999

Scotland
Northern
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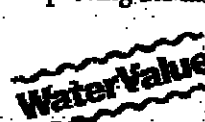


Photo: Chris Jones

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Perfect platform for trainspotters

Those whose interest in railways encompasses the historical rather than the day-to-day practicalities of getting around are likely to be familiar with the National Railway Museum in York.

The largest of its kind in the world, the collection includes 103 engines and 280 items of rolling stock, while the archives contain 1.4 million photographs, 230,000 engineering drawings, 15,000 books and 7,000 posters.

Graham Stratford, the museum's head of public affairs, says that applying for the Charter Mark helped to unite and focus staff. "We know we exist in a competitive environment, and to keep our slot as one of the most visited attractions outside London — 430,000 last year — we have to go on meeting and exceeding our visitors' expectations."

What York is to trains, Portsmouth is to ships — and to the Royal Navy in particular. Resolutions in the size of the dockyard and falling employment in ancillary industries have forced the city fathers to look to tourism as an alternative source of revenue.

The council has set up three tourist information centres — overseen by the English and Southern Tourist Boards — which handled 370,000 inquiries last year, 15 per cent of them from abroad. All the permanent and most of the temporary staff speak at least one foreign language.

Birmingham's transformation from the grimy "work-

The glory days of engineering and shipping inspire quality tourism, says John Young

shop of the world" into a city with serious cultural ambitions is reflected in the fact that it has the largest local authority museums service in Britain.

At its heart is the Museum and Art Gallery, which houses the world's leading collection of Pre-Raphaelite art; it recently presented a successful Burne-Jones exhibition. The Birmingham City Authority also runs the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, which reflects the early years of the century, and Aston Hall, one of the finest Jacobean houses in the country. The Charter Mark assessors were impressed by visitors' positive comments.

Belfast Zoological Gardens, established in 1954, have in recent years provided a haven for recreation and education in a city plagued for so long by violence and destruction. The zoo has won several prizes for animal husbandry and the design of its enclosure. Now it has added a Charter Mark award for its facilities, service and value for money.

In Torquay, the Riviera Centre has won two Charter Mark awards for its conference bureau and its sports and leisure department. Sarah James, of the conference bureau, says that bookings extend well into the next millennium with more

and more national organisations and companies being sold on the delights of Torbay.

"We attach tremendous importance to detail to ensure we cover the simplest to the most difficult tasks," she says. "We offer not only a free venue-finding service, but also complete conference packaging."

Sports and leisure facilities include a swimming pool, Jacuzzi, steam room and sauna, as well as a gym which is used by Torquay United Football Club members, and athletes who hope to qualify for the British skiing team for the next Winter Olympics.

While visits to museums or swimming pools are generally agreeable experiences, encounters with police or tax inspectors are something that most people prefer to avoid. But Inspector Reg Haslam, of Merseyside Police's traffic department, insists that the work of his team goes well beyond "nicking" the errant driver who is caught speeding.

He points to the department's goal of reducing the number of traffic accidents which cost so much in public money and human suffering.

Every accident is recorded on a computerised Ordnance Survey map along with details of what caused it. This enables the authorities to determine if and where further traffic re-

strictions are needed, in some cases this cuts casualties by half.

"Our investigations are carried out to the highest standards, comparable to those methods employed by the CID," Inspector Haslam says. "We have officers trained to provide care and support for bereaved relatives, and the letters of appreciation we get far outnumber the complaints."

The Inland Revenue's much publicised attempts to present a more humane face to the public have been rewarded by the granting of 11 new Charter Marks, bringing its total to 19.

The winning offices, mostly in the North of England and in Scotland, include Shipley in West Yorkshire, where more than 1,000 staff have been trained to use "plain English" and to provide a streamlined telephone answering service for customers, most of whom live more than 200 miles away. In Bootle, on Merseyside, tax workshops have been organised and customers are invited to visit the office.

The Inland Revenue's South Yorkshire region, with its headquarters in Sheffield, employs some 4,200 staff in 33 offices and carries out regular complaints surveys to determine the levels of customer satisfaction.

The Buckle tax office, on the remote Moray coast of northeast Scotland, which employs just 16 people, has organised an appointments system for its 6,400 customers. This helped it to earn its second Charter Mark award.



Living history: Platform 4 resident theatre group as Brunel and Stephenson at the National Railway Museum

Scheme wins Labour's approval

Edward Fennell on how Charter Mark's ethos of putting customers first fits the Government's strategy

ONE of the biggest practical challenges facing this administration is how to deliver on its commitment to "joined-up Government". Behind the neat catchphrase is a complex exercise in re-engineering the way public services are planned and delivered by emphasising co-operation between departments — whether in Whitehall or the town hall.

But for bureaucrats to co-operate often goes against the grain of territorial protectiveness. So a set of tools is now being used to weld services together. Among them, Charter Mark has an important role to play.

Admittedly when Labour arrived in power it needed to be convinced that Charter Mark was a worthwhile undertaking. But an evaluation of the scheme produced some impressive results. Charter Mark organisations were shown to perform considerably better than the norm. Staff morale was higher. And feedback from the public showed

that they were better consulted by Charter Mark organisations. As a result the Government decided not to scrap the award — but to expand it.

Yet if Charter Mark was to gain a new Labour character it had to support the "joined up" approach. Fortunately that is not difficult. Charter Mark is about putting the public, not the providers, at the centre of the service.

Getting rid of rivalries and abandoning turf wars between public servants is part of this process. As Peter Kilfoyle, Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of Public Service, puts it: "There have been substantial improvements in public service delivery by a number of government bodies — especially in the agencies. But these improvements are not always coherently connected. I want us to do much more to see the customer's point of

view. Citizens dealing with life's events — marriage, retirement, long-term care, whatever — want a package of services tailored to their needs. They do not want to traipse round public sector agencies. We must make things easier for them through one-stop shops, tighter co-operation, collaborative electronic service provision, better signposting, between services, or whatever suits best."

Reflecting this approach the new Charter Mark criteria for this year include the need to work with other providers. Charter Mark also complements naturally the new Best Value programme through its emphasis on consulting users and reviewing standards of performance. The forthcoming White Paper on modernising Government will emphasise Charter Mark's role in promoting this customer-focused

approach. Mr Kilfoyle quotes, for example, the work of Hackney council, under the Better Government for Older People programme, in running a project for integrated services, and the Lewisham Benefits Agency prototype which provides central and local government benefits.

The emphasis within Charter Mark on partnership extends to the relationship with the public. Under the Conservatives the public were described as customers. Under Labour they have become users, with the implication that providers and users should collaborate closely to get the most out of the system. As Mr Kilfoyle points out: "Charter Mark emphasises co-operation between service providers and users. This can be deepened in many ways. For example, Chervell District Council Environmental

Health Department's bus takes services to the people. Birmingham council now operates 43 one-stop shops. And the National Museums of Scotland has a junior board of 12 schoolchildren." All three organisations are 1998 Charter Mark winners.

But co-operation does not disguise the fact that Charter Mark does have a hard edge. Mr Kilfoyle says there must be greater exposure to the public. "Charter Mark winners must have customer service standards which are transparent and open. Performance

against them must be assessed and subject to public scrutiny."

Perhaps the final link in the new framework of co-operation is between Charter Mark itself and the other quality awards. Mr Kilfoyle says: "Charter Mark is a tried and tested scheme. There is no doubt that it enhances public service delivery. Finally, let's not forget the workers. What is good for the users of services must also be good ultimately for those who deliver them. Charter Mark winners have high self-esteem."



Peter Kilfoyle: ending turf wars between public servants

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

TUESDAY JANUARY 26 1999

Mirror directors face showdown today



Montgomery determined not to resign

BY RICHARD MILES
MEDIA EDITOR

LAST-MINUTE efforts were being made last night to avoid a damaging confrontation at today's board meeting of Mirror Group. Sir Victor Blank, its chairman, and David Montgomery, the chief executive, Sir Victor had been expected to put a motion before the board seeking the removal of Mr Montgomery, who has run the newspaper group since the death of Robert Maxwell. Mr Montgomery is determined not to resign and will oppose any attempt to unseat him. Sir Victor believes that he has the

support of most, if not all, of the company's non-executive directors, while Mr Montgomery believes that he can rely on the votes of the executive directors.

The dispute comes in the midst of potential takeover bids for the group, which publishes *The Mirror*, the *Sunday Mirror* and *The People*. It also owns Midland Independent Newspapers, the regional publisher.

Regional Independent Media, publisher of the *Yorkshire Post*, is awaiting more information in the hope of making a formal bid, possibly in excess of its offer of £913 million, or 200p a share, already on the table.

The situation is being closely watched by

Trinity, the largest UK regional newspaper group, which withdrew from talks on an all-share deal at about 160p.

The move against Mr Montgomery is being fuelled by the fact that he is seen as a barrier to a deal with Trinity, something that appeals to Phillips & Drew, the largest Mirror shareholder, with a 22 per cent stake.

It is believed that Sir Victor and other Mirror directors were being advised last night that a formal vote that would split the board would not be in the interests of the company or its shareholders.

A Mirror takeover by RIM or Trinity would lead to an automatic reference to the

Monopolies and Mergers Commission. A full inquiry could take up to the six months.

It was unclear last night whether Sir Victor, who became chairman of Mirror Group six months ago, will seek a confrontation at today's meeting. If he does, one tactic for Mr Montgomery would be to seek a postponement with the backing of executive directors.

Legal and General, a 4.4 per cent Mirror shareholder, yesterday asked to meet Sir Victor. The insurance company feels that Phillips & Drew seems to be driving the agenda.

Mirror shares rose 9p to 207p yesterday.

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5890.9	(+19.7)
FTSE All Share	2672.59	(+7.53)
Nikkei	14208.81	(+54.41)
Dow Jones	9067.20	(+34.47)
S&P Composite	1222.78	(+2.41)

US RATE

Federal Funds	4.75%	(+1%)
Long bond	105.2	(+0.25%)
Yield	5.11%	(+0.06%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	5.75%	(+0.25%)
Libor long call	120.04	(+0.04)

STERLING

New York	1.8563	(+0.0001)
London	1.8574	(+0.0011)
SP	1.4334	(+0.0002)
Yen	168.63	(+0.01)
£ Index	100.2	(+0.1)

US\$ \$/£

London	1.1588	(+0.0001)
SP	1.3824	(+0.0001)
Yen	113.01	(+0.01)
£ Index	100.2	(+0.1)

Tokyo close Yen 114.30

Banks express surprise at terms of review

BY RICHARD MILES
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

BANKS gave a cautious welcome yesterday to the terms of the Government's review of banking services, but expressed surprise that Donald Cruickshank, the review's head, had sought to include cross-selling in his investigation.

Mr Cruickshank, a former telecommunications regulator and chairman of the Action 2000 millennium bug campaign, also questioned rumours that the Treasury was considering the imposition of a windfall tax on bank profits.

While Mr Cruickshank emphasised that his inquiry would focus on competition issues, he said there were already grounds for investigating four distinct areas: leading to small businesses, money transmission, credit cards and joint supply, which includes cross-selling.

"It may not appear as a rallying cry to address the things consumers have said they are concerned about, but the failure to understand needs of small businesses, but alleged failings like these can only be addressed by first understanding the competitive structure of the industry," he said.

Mr Cruickshank will make international comparisons on innovation, competition and efficiency in the UK banking sector. He will also look at whether the Government should consider intervening in the industry.

Bankers said they were surprised at the inclusion within the review of joint supply—the common practice of bundling different products together such as buildings insurance with a mortgage, or a personal loan with a current account.

Control of the credit card network among merchants will also come under Mr Cruickshank's scrutiny. In the US, the Department of Justice has argued that Visa and MasterCard's domination of the credit card network has been anti-competitive.

Social exclusion and consumer redress, however, fall outside the scope of his remit. The deadline for submissions to the review is February 26. He expects to make his final report by the end of the year.

Commentary, page 29

Pressure put on Lucas to discuss £4bn bid

BY PAUL DURMAN

FEDERAL-MOGUL, the fast-growing American car parts group, is trying to force LucasVarity into takeover talks by setting out terms of a conditional offer worth £3.9 billion.

LucasVarity, which makes braking and electronic systems, has rejected an offer of cash and Federal-Mogul stock worth 280p a share. This is 36p more than LucasVarity's closing price yesterday of 244p — up 29p.

Federal-Mogul said it was told in writing yesterday that LucasVarity was "not willing to enter into discussions". The US group hopes that Schroders and other leading UK investors will put pressure on "Victor Rice", LucasVarity's chief executive, to hold talks.

Dick Snell, chairman and chief executive of Federal-Mogul, said: "Having been rebuffed, we are making this announcement to allow shareholders to know about it and to do with it what they think best." Federal-Mogul's offer is conditional on it being given an opportunity to conduct due diligence checks and the recommendation of the LucasVarity board.

In a letter to Mr Rice and Ed Wallis, LucasVarity's chairman, Mr Snell said the 280p a share offer was a 40 per cent premium to the market price before recent takeover speculation. "This is a full price which would offer compelling value to your shareholders and in our judgment is worthy of their consideration," he wrote.

"We are dismayed at your refusal to grant us confirmatory due diligence, particularly since... our principal concern in any such investigation would be to test the reasonableness of the assumptions underlying items such as the pension fund surplus, rather than any detailed assessment of commercially sensitive areas within your company."

LucasVarity's treatment of its pension fund has often

been of concern to its pensioners and employees.

Taking over the larger LucasVarity would enable Mr Snell to achieve the "big hairy audacious goal" he has set for Federal-Mogul of becoming a \$10 billion company by 2002. He said a deal would create a £13 billion industry leader.

Federal-Mogul, with interests that embrace connecting rods, engine bearings, pistons, camshafts and chassis components, has grown rapidly through a series of acquisitions, including the £1.5 billion takeover of T&N two years ago.

LucasVarity's formal response was limited to a reiteration of its statement earlier this month that it was in "preliminary discussions... with a number of companies in connection with a wide range of strategic alternatives, including joint ventures, acquisitions, dispositions, alliances and mergers or other combinations".

The company and its financial advisers, Lazard Brothers and Morgan Stanley, did not respond to calls for comment. Federal-Mogul is being advised by Merrill Lynch, the investment bank that gave LucasVarity a third opinion when it sought to convert itself into a US company last autumn.

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Brian Larcombe, chief executive of 3i, wants to obtain Electra at a significant discount

3i overtures lift Electra

BY RICHARD MILES

SHARES in Electra Investment Trust yesterday soared 119p to 682p on confirmation that it has had "an unsolicited approach" from 3i, its main rival in the venture capital field.

3i opened talks with Electra on a possible £1 billion-plus takeover a fortnight ago, but the two have reached deadlock on price and the value of unquoted investments in Electra's portfolio.

Brian Larcombe, 3i's chief executive, is seeking to buy El-

ectra at a significant discount to its net asset value (NAV). Before yesterday's gains, Electra was trading at a wide discount, estimated at 17 per cent.

Michael Stoddart, Electra's chairman, who earned more than £1 million last year including performance bonus, is arguing for a premium to NAV. The trust's manager, Electra Fleming — a 50/50 joint venture with Robert Fleming, the investment bank — could also be an obstacle.

Investment analysts said a merger to form a venture capitalist with assets of nearly £5 billion would enhance value for both sets of shareholders. On one estimate, 3i investors would gain about 50p a share.

Rolly Crawford, of ABN Amro, said the extra £1 billion of assets would also secure 3i's place in the FTSE 100 index.

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Microsoft acquires stake in NTL for £300m

BY CHRIS AYRES

THE UK cable industry was given a significant boost yesterday when Microsoft, the US software giant, acquired a 5 per cent stake in NTL for \$300 million (£300 million).

The deal will help to improve the image of the UK cable industry, which is finally beginning to show signs of life after years of turmoil and slow growth. As part of the deal, Microsoft and NTL will form a "technology group" that will look at ways of developing ultra-fast Internet services and interactive television.

Shares in NTL, which is quoted on the Nasdaq stock market despite operating almost exclusively in the UK, rose nearly 25 per cent in early trading to a high of \$84. The company plans to float in London later this year. Shares in Britain's other two big cable companies — Cable & Wireless Communications and Telewest — also made significant gains, rising 4 and 10 per cent respectively.

Barclay Knapp, president of NTL, said: "Microsoft believes in our vision of bringing advanced digital Internet, telephone and television services to consumers and businesses throughout the UK."

Under the terms of the deal, Microsoft will buy convertible preferred stock in NTL, which is redeemable in cash or common stock ten years after its issue date. Microsoft will also receive 1.2 million five-year warrants to purchase NTL shares at \$84 per share, potentially taking the software giant's stake in the cable company up to 6.3 per cent. NTL said the software company's anti-trust battle with the US Government would not affect the deal.

Late last year, NTL said it was prepared to offer £160 million to buy Newcastle United Football Club.

Carphone Warehouse expects float

BY CHRIS AYRES



Dunstone store expansion

CHARLES DUNSTONE, the 34-year-old founder and managing director of The Carphone Warehouse, yesterday said a floatation of the mobile phone chain was "inevitable" as he announced the purchase of 270 Tandy-electrical stores from Inter-TAN, the US company.

The deal, thought to be worth no more than £10 million, will allow The Carphone

Warehouse to cope with the enormous demand for pre-pay mobile phones, which has resulted in some of the company's customers waiting one and a half hours to be served.

"It got to the point in December when we could not have physically dealt with more sales," said Mr Dunstone, whose personal fortune is estimated at £25 million. "We were putting up with it, but it was far from what we wanted as a pur-

chasing experience. This deal will ease the pressure a little bit."

Mr Dunstone said he was aware he could realise a significant amount of money by floating The Carphone Warehouse during the current craze for mobile phones. However, he said that no City advisers had yet been appointed and that a floatation was unlikely this year.

Mr Dunstone said Tandy's management and brand would stay, but the stores would under-

go a £20 million facelift. He said Tandy could eventually see mobile phones take up to 50 per cent of sales, and would widen its product range to sell phones from all networks.

The combined group will have 450 stores across the UK and 139 on the Continent. The acquisition of Tandy will boost The Carphone Warehouse's estimated sales for the year to March 1999 from £250 million to more than £350 million.

Bankers Trust pays \$1.1bn in bonuses

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

BANKERS TRUST paid out \$1.1 billion (£667 million) in bonuses excluding salaries last year, according to documents filed with the US Federal Reserve.

The payouts amount to more than 10 per cent of the \$10.1 billion market value of the bank and exceed Bankers Trust's 1998 profits of \$960 million.

The bank previously said its total compensation bill for last year amounted to \$1.5 billion. Bankers Trust employs 2,400 in Britain, 1,000 of whom are in Edinburgh. The total workforce is 20,000.

The bonus bonanza has come to light in conjunction with the takeover by Deutsche Bank announced last year. Deutsche has traditionally operated a more austere pay regime than its Wall Street rivals.

At the time of the takeover there was speculation that Deutsche Bank would attempt to push Bankers Trust bonuses down to cut costs.

Frank Newman, the executive chairman who will join Deutsche's board, was forced to send out a memo saying: "Until the merger closes, Bankers Trust will continue to operate independently and bonuses and promotions for 1998 will be approved in our normal process."

Mr Newman pledged to set aside \$400 million in "retention money" to keep key employees. Nevertheless, up to 5,500 jobs could be cut in an attempt to save \$1 billion per year after combining operations of the two banks in London and New York.

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Venture capitalists start to feel the pinch

3i's proposed £1 billion-plus takeover of Electra Investment Trust, its main rival in the UK's £40 billion venture capital market, comes as the demand for private equity shows the first signs of deterioration.

Although the British Venture Capital Association, the main industry body, will not publish 1998 figures until April, the consensus among market analysts is that the volume of larger deals has declined in the past six months.

Mike Wright, of the Centre for Management Buy-Out Research at the University of Nottingham, said last summer's crisis of confidence in world markets, coupled with the continued financial unrest in Latin America, has blunted investors' appetite for risk. More-

3i's offer for Electra is timely, says Richard Miles

ver, the huge weight of money in the market has pushed up the price of entry and inevitably led to a reduction in returns. So poor are the prospects say some analysts, that many institutions have indicated that they would like to withdraw from the market.

"There are a lot of funds in the market and few good, big deals. The second half of the year was bad for the mega-deals, say £100 million or above. But for the smaller deals, it's not too bad," Mr Wright said. If his analysis is correct, then the market circumstances lend weight to 3i's talks with Electra. 3i thrives on smaller private equi-

ty deals: its £2 billion plus portfolio consists of 3,200 distinct investments.

Electra, by comparison, says it has just 80 significant investments in unquoted companies. Electra Fleming — the 50-50 joint venture with Robert Fleming, the investment bank, that manages Electra — prefers to target larger deals. For example, it supported the Tote in its unsuccessful £375 million bid for Coral, the bookmaker.

3i's main strength, however, is that its shares trade at a substantial premium to net asset value — estimated at 17 per cent by some experts — while Electra traded at a similarly wide dis-

count, at least before yesterday's remarkable share gains after confirming 3i's "unsolicited" approach.

Rolly Crawford, ABN Amro's head of investment trusts, said 3i's significant premium would make a deal asset-enhancing for both sets of shareholders. He estimates that 3i shareholders would benefit by about 50p a share, while Electra investors would gain from the elimination of the discount.

Much has been made of how the proposed takeover would strengthen 3i's international operations — Electra has reinforced its continental network over the past few years — but in Mr

Crawford's view, that is no more than a minor consideration in the thinking of Brian Larcombe, chief executive.

Far more important is 3i's determination to remain in the FTSE 100 index and the benefits that such a position brings. A further £1 billion of assets would make the company safe from newcomers, and so help to preserve the premium on which it trades.

Of course, the deal may never get off the ground. Besides arguing about Electra's net asset value of £1.2 billion, Michael Stoddart, its chairman, is believed to be holding out for a premium on its underlying investments — even though it trades at such a wide discount.

Temps, page 30

Chinese devaluation hint hits markets

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

SHARES in Hong Kong and China suffered big losses yesterday after the Chinese Government hinted that it may be the next major emerging economy to devalue its currency.

With Brazilian markets shut for a holiday, a fresh bout of market nerves was prompted by an article in the Chinese press arguing that devaluation may not prove too damaging for Asian economies. The article in the influential Chinese *Business Weekly* argued that the experience of Brazil suggested that "devaluation or

floating of the yuan would not definitely be a bad thing".

All Chinese newspapers are strictly controlled by the Government, and analysts said that publication of the piece suggested that a devaluation debate has begun within the Government.

However, suggestions that China is on the point of devaluation brought an immediate denial from the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, which said that the article merely reflected a "private opinion" and that there had been no change in the Government's protective stance.

The report, however, took its toll on local markets, with analysts fearful that a devaluation would also force the Hong Kong dollar to abandon its US dollar peg and prompt another round of damaging competitive devaluations across Asia.

The Hang Seng index in Hong Kong fell 239.02, or 2.5 per cent, to close at 9,499.50. Sentiment was also harmed by figures that showed November retail sales in the special administrative region falling 20 per cent from a year earlier.

In Shanghai, the "B" share index, which is open to foreign investors, slipped 3.1 per cent to end at a record low. The Chinese market has also been under pressure since the collapse of Guangdong International Trust and Investment Corporation earlier this month.

Most analysts, however, said that China is under no immediate pressure to abandon its dollar peg. Although export growth is faltering, China still runs a healthy trade surplus and has massive foreign reserves to protect its only partially convertible currency.

Growth figures cut back

FALLING interest rates, lower returns from shares and rising life expectancy have forced the investment industry to scale down its projections for growth (writes Marianne Curphey).

The PIA said the changes would affect the projections that salesmen use when selling life and pensions policies, and unit and investment trust savings schemes.

The PIA said that the rates will apply for new products from April 6 and for all business by June 30.

Projections were last changed in November 1993 and their use in the sales process is strictly regulated.



Marjorie Scardino, with Madame Tussaud's waxwork of Shakespeare, is selling businesses

Pearson's unwanted American activities put under hammer

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

PEARSON, the media and information group, yesterday put up for sale a collection of American information businesses it does not want which have annual revenues of about \$250 million (£150 million).

The businesses, which include Jossey-Bass, specialists in management publishing, Appleton & Lange, which publishes medical texts and The Bureau of Business Practice, were all part of Pearson's \$4.6 billion acquisition last November of the Simon & Schuster education, reference and business and professional operations.

The seven businesses now being sold were to have formed part of a proposed sale of some of the Simon & Schuster activities to Hicks, Muse Tate & Furst, the US private equity firm, for \$360 million. Hicks, Muse decided against going ahead with the purchase and Pearson bought the whole lot.

The UK company, whose chief executive is Marjorie Scardino, has decided to keep a couple of the businesses that were to have formed part of the Hicks, Muse purchase — in particular Macmillan Computer Publishing which will now form part of Pearson Education.

Pearson is also keeping the New York Institute of Finance which will become part of Pearson's newly created Management Education business.

The seven businesses, which are being sold, piece-meal and could fetch between \$300 million and \$350 million, include Macmillan General Reference, which publishes a full range of reference books, and Macmillan Library Reference, which sells premium-priced quality reference materials to libraries and higher education institutions.

Pep sales stay strong

By SUSAN EMMETT

PRIVATE investors shrugged off market turmoil and continued to plough their cash into unit trusts and personal equity plans in 1998, according to a survey published yesterday.

Figures from the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (AUTIF) showed that the amount of money invested in Peps and unit trusts rose by 16 per cent to £183 billion by the end of last year. Nearly two

million private investors saved £1.6 billion in 1998.

Peps, which will be replaced by individual savings accounts in April, accounted for more than 25 per cent of funds under management. Total Peps sales in 1998 reached a record £11 billion, up 18 per cent on the previous year.

Net retail sales of unit trusts in December were up 35 per cent on the previous year to

£596 million. Net retail Peps sales reached £368 million, a 30 per cent increase on 1997.

However, Philip Warland, director-general of AUTIF, questioned whether sales would have the same appeal. Mr Warland said: "Sales will be more complicated and people will have to be persuaded that they are like Peps. But I will be disappointed if the gross level of sales are not similar to this year."

Ford extends four-day week

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

FORD will today deliver a fresh blow to workers at its Dagenham plant, with a lengthy extension of its short-time working and a three-week closure over Easter.

Ford's Dagenham plant, which employs 4,400, has already completed the longest period of short-time working in recent industrial history. It has been working a four-day week since October. It will now continue until the end of March, a period that will then run into complete closure over Easter.

Ford will blame poor exports for the short-time working. Dagenham is its biggest UK factory, producing the Fiesta and relying heavily on the export market. Workers will be given either training or other duties during the short-time periods and will not suffer pay cuts.

But unions are concerned about continued uncertainty at the plant. Doug Collins, national officer at the AEEU,

said: "We need a long-term solution to this problem, not the piecemeal approach we have had up until now. Further short-time working will only increase insecurity and concern among the workforce. Four thousand and four hundred jobs depend on a decision to meet the problems in the long term."

Tony Woodley, chief negotiator for the T&G, said: "There is very intense competition in the marketplace, especially for cars such as the Fiesta. However, while our members may be prepared to live with these cutbacks in the short term, we have to look to the long term."

Ford declined to comment. Today unions will press Rover not to close its only automotive components factory in South Wales. Rover said last week that the future of the Bargoed plant was uncertain. Forty-five jobs could go — nearly half of which are filled by disabled workers.

Banana row threat to jobs

By CARL MORTISHED

THOUSANDS of jobs in Scottish Borders woollen mills were hanging in the balance last night as diplomats wrangled in Geneva over the agenda at a World Trade Organisation meeting on the long-running banana dispute.

In a surprise move St Lucia, the Dominican Republic and Cote d'Ivoire blocked the US request for \$520 million (£315 million) of punitive tariffs against European exports. The US is claiming damages over the EU banana regime, which it claims applies illegal quotas in favour of Caribbean and African bananas. The three states to block the US request are members of the African Caribbean Pacific group of states favoured by the EU banana regime.

Failure to agree an agenda means that the meeting will reconvene this morning. But the US was last night still opposing a compromise put forward by Renata Ruggiero, the WTO Di-

rector-General. Trade experts say failure to secure US agreement to the compromise could mean unilateral US sanctions from as early as February 3.

The sanctions requested by the US will hit an indiscriminate range of exports including Scottish cashmere knitwear, peccorino cheese, chandeliers and electric kettles.



Banana growers blocked US

Ericsson cuts 11% of staff

By CARL MORTISHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

ERICSSON is cutting its workforce by 11 per cent worldwide in a bid to increase efficiency and restore its flagging profitability.

The Swedish telecoms manufacturer is cutting its 104,000 strong workforce by 11,000 and hopes to save \$K13 billion per year after completion of the two-year redundancy programme. The company refused to say how many of its 3,500 workers in the UK were threatened by redundancy.

Ericsson has a headquarters in Burgess Hill, West Sussex and owns a manufacturing facility in Lincolnshire. A profits warning in December highlighted the company's problem, both in public networks where it suffers from reduced demand for fixed telephony products and increased competition for business from state utilities. Furthermore, Ericsson's mobile phone business has suffered from the

surge in demand for cheap, pre-paid models.

A spokesman admitted yesterday that the jobs toll could get larger as Ericsson switched to buying in standardised equipment and technology. "There will certainly be further outsourcing," Ericsson said the job losses related to technological change, requiring the company to switch to less labour-intensive production methods and a smaller workforce.

Ericsson is facing a comprehensive technological shift. For example, all of Europe's large telecom networks are digitised today, and the next wave of investments will focus on Internet-based network structures.

The company said that 3,300 jobs would be lost in Sweden with the closure of production at a plant in Norrköping. The bulk of the 11,000 jobs to go worldwide will be in the network operators business, the core business serving large utilities.

UK facility to help Indonesian firms

A BRITISH rescue measure that is aimed at helping Indonesian businesses to survive the regional economic turmoil has finally been announced — months after other countries stepped in to provide assistance. The UK Government said yesterday that it will provide a multimillion-pound facility to encourage sales to Indonesian companies, overcoming the fear that the Indonesians may not be able to pay their bills.

Through its Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), the Government will provide reinsurance that will allow private-sector credit insurers to resume the financing of British exports to Indonesia. The private sector had effectively placed the country on a short-term credit blacklist. Brian Wilson, Minister for Trade, said: "Indonesia has traditionally been one of Britain's major trading partners. Although the country is experiencing some serious economic difficulties at present, we remain hopeful that it will pull through before too long."

However, the United States, Australia and Japan put similar safeguards in place months ago. The ECGD spokesman admitted, The ECGD said that the UK deal had been held up partly by the Indonesian Government's reluctance to act as a guarantor for its firms. Short-term credit insurance used to be managed by the UK Government itself before a privatisation in 1991. The World Bank gave warning yesterday that political unrest in Indonesia was slowing down the pace of vital financial and corporate reform.

Freemove restructure

DIXONS, the electricals retail group, is setting up a subsidiary company to manage Freemove, its fast-growing Internet access business. John Clare, chief executive of Dixons, will chair Freemove Ltd, of which Mark Darby will be chief executive. Dixons' announcement earlier this month that it had attracted 900,000 users since its launch in September has led to a sharp rise in its share price. Another separate company, Dixons Group Retail Property Ltd, is being set up to manage the property portfolio, while the retail part of the group is to be divided into three divisions.

Hill Hire seeks £1.8m

HILL HIRE, the truck and trailer rental firm based in Bradford, yesterday announced the placing of almost 1.5 million new shares to raise approximately £1.8 million. These proceeds will be used to reduce the group's gearing, which stood at 180 per cent at the end of last year. After the placing, it will be reduced to approximately 160 per cent, which the company said was "a level which is within industry norms and which provides scope for future development". The company also said it expects to declare a final dividend of 3.2p per share in May.

P&O orders ferries

P&O, the transport group, has ordered the world's two largest and fastest cruise ferries from Fincantieri, the Italian yard, at a cost of £180 million. The cruise ferries, which will operate on the route between Rotterdam and Hull, will have a maximum speed of 22 knots, reducing the journey time by two-and-a-half hours. They will replace four vessels now operating that route, which will be deployed elsewhere. The ferries will be able to carry 1,360 passengers, have room for 250 cars and house a cinema and business centre.

Thomson buys chain

THOMSON TRAVEL GROUP has increased its high-street presence by buying the Callers-Pegasus retail chain for £17 million. The deal, to be earnings enhancing this year, brings TTTG a business with 34 travel shops in northeast England, a flight centre in Newcastle and a small tour operator, Focus Holidays. In the year to October 31, it sold almost 200,000 air-inclusive tours, reporting profits before tax and exceptional of £1.1 million. TTTG said its acquisition is to be run on a standalone basis alongside its 800-strong Lunn Poly chain.

Trafficmaster link

TRAFFICMASTER, the traffic information supplier, has formed a £1 million joint venture with the Royal Automobile Club to develop a range of network services for motorists, including navigation assistance, public transport details and access to breakdown services. Trafficmaster and the RAC will inject £500,000 each into the venture, called RAC Trafficmaster Telematics. Bill McIntosh, finance director of Trafficmaster, said the deal was expected to be earnings neutral for his company this year.

Wintrust earnings rise

WINTRUST, the merchant banking group, has reported a 10.5 per cent rise in net earnings to £1.47 million for the six months to September 30. Richard Spiro, chairman, said yesterday that Wintrust had benefited from the bigger institutions' wanting interest in debt packages of less than £10 million, opening the door to smaller lenders. He said this had been crucial in insulating Wintrust against the downturn in many sectors. Earnings per share rose to 4.59p (13.28p). There is an interim dividend of 5.35p (4.94p).

HR Owen's £2m buy

HR OWEN, the car dealer, has bought Bradshaw Webb, a Mercedes-Benz dealership, for £2.2 million in shares and cash. Bradshaw Webb, a franchised dealership based in Chislesea and Wandsworth, will add to Owen's three Mercedes-Benz businesses, which trade as Malaya. In 1997, Bradshaw Webb had consolidated losses of £105,966, and net assets of £122,781. It is 75 per cent owned by Colin Giltrap, Owen's non-executive deputy chairman, who receives £1.1 million of non-shares, lifting his Owen stake from 4.2 per cent to 8.5 per cent.

Glenmorangie deal

GLENMORANGIE, the Scotch whisky producer, has joined forces with LVMH, the French luxury goods and drinks group, to develop its business in China. LVMH has paid \$1.2 million (£725,000) in return for a 39 per cent stake in Glenmorangie's existing joint venture, set up in 1992 to distribute its Glenmorangie and Highland Glen brands as well as J. Man Yung, a locally produced white spirit. As a result, the Scottish group's stake is reduced from 60 per cent to 39 per cent and its Chinese partner emerges with 22 per cent.

Gremlin in takeover talks

TAKEOVER fever gripped the British computer games sector yesterday as Gremlin, producer of titles such as *Men in Black*, revealed that it was in bid talks with "a number of interested parties", thought to include Electronic Arts of the US (Chris Ayres writes).

Shares of Gremlin, which recently disappointed the market with a profits warning, rose 26p to 100p, leaving the company valued at £19 million.

Industry sources said other potential bidders for Gremlin could include Havas, the media arm of Vivendi, the French conglomerate.

Sears

The article on the takeover of Sears by J11 (*Business News*, January 22) did not take proper account of a 10 for 1 share consolidation and, as a result, gave incorrect valuations for outstanding share options. Sears has asked us to point out the options will not generate any profits.

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US costs

COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

Brazil is not being offered the correct medicine

Britain's recovery after leaving the ERM is a better example of how to react after devaluation

Statistically, it may be the eighth-biggest economy in the world but, as General De Gaulle once said: "Brazil is not a serious country." The absence of seriousness was demonstrated not so much in the Brazilian Government's inability to stick to its core economic policy as to avoid a devaluation. The real lack of seriousness has been shown in the Brazilian Government's and the world's response.

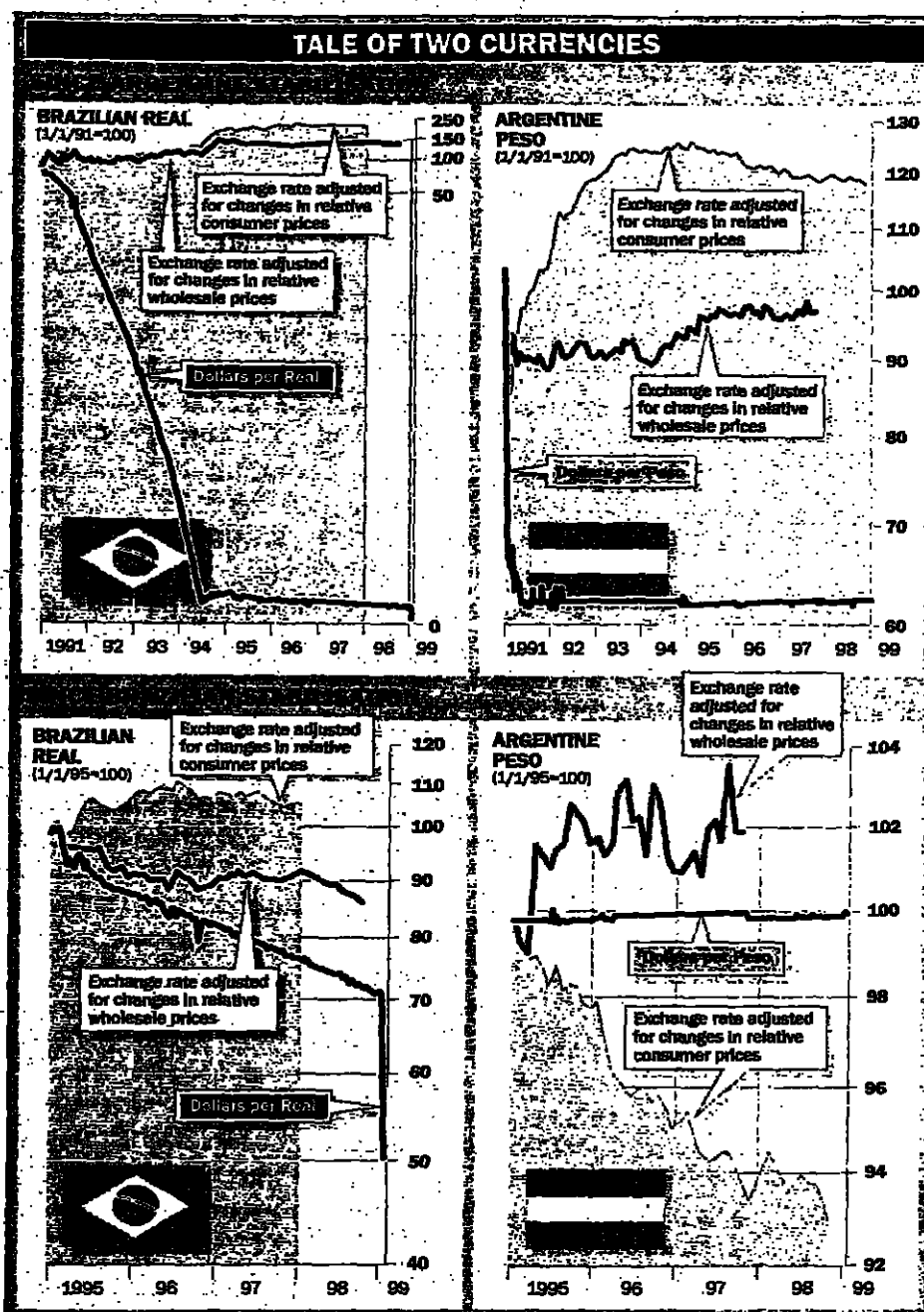
The question about Brazil that preoccupies most economic commentators at present is whether the financial meltdown will now engulf other countries that rely on exchange-rate links, ranging from Argentina to Hong Kong and China. Others ask whether the success of Argentina and Hong Kong in defending their currency pegs implies that other countries such as Brazil, and perhaps Indonesia and Russia, should follow them in abandoning national currencies and simply adopting the dollar, the euro or the yen.

But these questions are beside the point. Argentina and Hong Kong are both in a totally different category from Brazil. They totally abandoned their monetary autonomy by guaranteeing that every currency note that they issue is backed by a dollar held at the central bank. More importantly, they have created the two key conditions under which a currency board of this type can work: they have rigorously controlled their government borrowings and they have convinced their citizens that there can be no benefit whatsoever in having a national monetary policy independent of the dictates of the US Federal Reserve. In Argentina, the Government has been able to achieve this through a constitutional revolution after decades of economic chaos and violent dictatorship.

In Hong Kong, the case has been easier to make, simply on the grounds that Hong Kong is a tiny open economy far too small to derive any real benefits from managing its own currency and setting its own interest rates.

These conditions simply do not apply in Brazil. Like Russia and Indonesia, Brazil is much more politically unruly, much larger and much less exposed to foreign trade than either Argentina or Hong Kong. It also has a government that is much more corrupt and less committed to collecting taxes and living within its means.

It is the Brazilian Government's post-devaluation policy that represents the really serious dimension of this crisis — and illustrates the lack of seriousness, both in the world's approach. Nobody can blame Brazil for having failed to defend its exchange rate in the



middle of a global financial crisis and a deep domestic recession. Similar challenges have repeatedly overwhelmed far richer and more sophisticated economies, ranging from Korea in 1997 to Britain, Italy and Sweden in 1992 and France in 1983. In fact nobody outside the International Monetary Fund and the US Treasury was much surprised by the collapse of Brazil's exchange rate policy on January 13 and the real's 30 per cent devaluation. The absence of any surprise was well demonstrated by the relatively calm financial reaction around the world.

Why, then, do I say that Brazil is not behaving, or being treated, as a serious country? Because the IMF and the US Treasury are acting in a fundamentally frivolous manner — pushing the Brazilian Government towards a literally incredible and wrongheaded economic framework that is almost guaranteed to collapse. After the ERM traumas of 1992 in Italy, Scandinavia and Britain and the more recent currency crises in Asia, a few general lessons about devaluations should surely have been learnt.

The three most important principles of a post-devaluation policy can be readily stated by anyone who recalls the rapid economic recovery after White Wednesday in Britain.

The first principle is that the Government must never raise interest rates or waste foreign exchange reserves in trying to "defend" a currency which the markets have already succeeded in knocking off a previously established peg. The second is that the only right way to control inflation, in such circumstances is to set out and implement a credible plan for reducing the public sector's budget deficit in a gradual but deliberate way. The third and most important principle is that stability can be restored in only one way in a country where financial and economic confidence has been completely shattered: by reviving economic growth and creating a clear prospect of rising profitability and falling unemployment.

Unfortunately, the Brazilian authorities, apparently under pressure from the IMF and the US Treasury, are turning all these principles on their head. Instead of cutting interest rates immediately after the devaluation, they have raised them from 30 per cent to even more absurd levels of 50 per cent and above. Instead of accepting the inevitable — that the real will fall well below any reasonable definition of "fair value" before rebounding on the foreign exchanges — Brazil

has been wasting anything up to \$1 billion of reserves every day in a futile attempt to prevent it from falling "too far". Instead of seizing the opportunity presented by a national crisis to restructure the tax and public spending system and put the public finances on a sustainable footing, they are trying to rush through piecemeal emergency measures with questionable political support.

Brazil is, according to World Bank figures, the world's most unequal and tightly taxed leading economy. The richest 10 per cent of the population receive 47 per cent of the country's total income, and taxes amount to just 19 per cent of GDP.

What Brazil needs to achieve a convincing stabilisation is a fundamental restructuring of its fiscal systems designed to create government surpluses after the economy recovers and to ensure the political acceptability of sound finances by turning taxes and public spending into instruments of modest redistribution, instead of mechanisms for impoverishing the already poor.

Finally, and most urgently, a post-devaluation economic policy has to create a confident expectation of economic growth. And the only way of achieving that in an economy paralysed by interest rates of 50 per cent plus is by aggressive monetary

easing. As Lombard Street Research, the economic consultancy based in London, noted last week in a despairing analysis of Brazilian policy: "The starting point of new policy is not fiscal consolidation and devaluation but fiscal consolidation and aggressive monetary easing. The real should be set free to find its own equilibrium level. Extremely low inflation (running at only 0.5 per cent a year in December) means that Brazil can afford to pursue this line of defence."

The Government, however, has so far been doing exactly the opposite. By simultaneously raising interest rates and raising taxes it has been sending a powerful signal to consumers, businessmen and foreign investors that the Brazilian economy will continue to fall steeply in the year ahead. In short, far from restoring financial confidence or increasing political support for its stabilisation measures, the Government, with the IMF and the US Treasury looking over its shoulder, is virtually guaranteeing a succession of economic and political crises stretching as far ahead as the eye can see.

Why have Brazilian policymakers seized so firmly the wrong end of the stick? Why have they been pushed so enthusiastically down the road to financial perdition by the IMF and US Treasury? It cannot be a misunderstanding about economics. Even the ivory-tower officials at the IMF must surely realise that a falling currency cannot be "defended" by raising interest rates. They must be aware that an exchange-rate peg cannot simply be replaced with another at a lower level after the very principle of pegging is seen to have failed. An interest rate of 100 per cent a year offers no attraction to investors who know that the value of their principal could be devalued by 30 per cent in a day.

As Richard Medley, the New York economic consultant, has noted, there has been only one example in living memory of a currency successfully defended with high interest rates: the Mexican peso after the 1995 crisis. "And that only worked because the US Government said to investors: take massively high interest rates and we will guarantee you repayment."

Perhaps economic officials are so reluctant to let Brazil cut interest rates and allow the real to find its own level because, deep down, they believe that Brazil is still not a "serious country". They do not believe that Brazil's low inflation could possibly be sustainable and therefore they do not want it to follow the example set by Britain in 1992. But unless the US Treasury is willing to undertake and pay for another Mexican-style bailout, the international economic community will soon have to come up with a different approach to the crisis in Brazil. Maybe they will have to start treating Brazil in the same way as any other serious country — a good example to start with would be Britain's experience after White Wednesday.

Millennium gap separates firms from consumers



JASON NISSE

As the rather irritating clock overlooking Blackfriars Bridge in London tells you, there are only 339 days left to the millennium. However, many of us seem to be suffering from new era inertia already. Ask most people what the millennium means to them and, high on the list of answers, will be the replies "a computer bug" or "a dome in Greenwich".

Given this mixture of apathy and hostility, it is a little difficult to use the millennium as a marketing tool. Companies that have listened to some over-trendy lobby from a design agency talking about the new era being a time for rebirth and cleansing will realise that there could be a perception gap between what consumers want and what marketers plan to give them.

That is why research being released this week from The Brand Futures Consultancy, the subsidiary of Grey Communications that specialises in marketing strategy, is timely and welcome. Brand Futures' *Opportunity Millennium*, as it is called, took the trouble to quiz 2,000 consumers and 149 directors of companies with turnover of £20 million or more about how they think companies should mark the millennium.

The results are quite startling. The overwhelming reaction from consumers is that companies should mark the new era by "putting something back into the community". The questionnaire suggested a number of different ways of marking the millennium. Obviously, if you ask someone whether they like world peace they will say yes. But even accepting that, there was a great deal of enthusiasm about potential charitable acts by corporations.

Suggestions that companies should help future generations with grants to schools and youth clubs had 90 per cent of people agreeing, and 70 per cent agreeing strongly. Funding libraries and creches gained almost as enthusiastic a response, while other suggestions that were popular were providing "a product or service to help to make our lives easier or less stressful in the future" and offering ways to learn new skills and abilities.

Of more interest to businesses is the statistic that 65 per cent of respondents would be more likely to use a company's products and services if they did mark the millennium with one of these charitable acts (this percentage rose to 74 per cent in the 35-54 age group).

However, there is some cynicism as to whether the companies will follow their advice. Asked how they reckoned that the millennium will be marked by corporations, 48 per cent of consumers expect there to be lots of special offers and promotions while only 14 per cent expect the kind of good acts that they rather hope the companies will carry out.

So over to the companies, which were asked what sort of "millennium-marking activities" are now being planned. Not surprisingly, 76 per cent immediately mentioned setting up a task force to deal with the year 2000 computer bug (which makes one wonder what the other 24 per cent are doing about the bug). Next came running an internal communications programme to ex-

plaining the company's vision for the new era, which is being conducted by 27 per cent of firms. Then came planning how the company and its brands would develop beyond the millennium, mentioned by 14 per cent of companies.

Only 11 per cent mentioned the charitable acts wanted by consumers, the same number as mentioned the dreaded millennium brands that the company should address this desire from consumers for companies to "do some good" and that there is no point looking back and celebrating what may already have been achieved: you have to try to work out what you want to achieve in this new era.

It is a difficult task trying to appear fresh and innovative while all of your competitors are attempting to do the same. But the price of failure is to look particularly leader-footed when the new era comes around.



Simon Ratcliffe, left, and Clive Cooper, who run Brand Futures

Panel must recognise impartiality

From Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale
Sir, I would like to rectify one point in your Commentary of January 7. I am not questioning the essence of the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers. I do question its present operational practice in terms of enforcement of its own Spirit, Principles and Rules, and its Executive Structure, which ignores the "Rule against Bias". I do not suggest that a professional on secondment cannot be trusted to act independently: I do believe that he or she must be seen to be impartial. It is relevant that the Panel itself recog-

nizes the need for impartiality in Section 116 of the introduction to the Code. It could also recognize this at the executive level as there are three deputy directors general who would have to act if the director-general were indisposed. They could therefore surely act if there is a potential conflict of interest. Yours faithfully, WOLFSON, The Great Universal Stores, Leconfield House, Curzon Street, London W1P 7FL. ☐ An incomplete version of this letter was published on January 22.

No comment

AN UNDIGNIFIED row has broken out between Alan Clark, the cultured MP and the *Financial Times* and one of its most charming writers. Clark, whose experiences with the opposite sex have often attracted attention, has written a most ungentle letter to the *FT*.

Lucy Kellaway had claimed that Clark had tried to charge £1,000 for an interview while hinting that he "might be able to improve the price somewhat". I have no idea what he

might have meant, because Clark, in a letter to the *FT*, confirms the sum but denies offering any such reduction. He continues most cruelly: "The idea of a sofa interview with Ms Kellaway held little appeal to me."

Clark is a guest in the *FT*'s planned celebrity lunch, date as yet undecided, but with places to be auctioned to readers for charity. There is a strong hint in the letter — "while I am delighted to help the Save the Children Fund, I have no desire to promote the *FT*", followed by further abuse — that he may now not attend.

Neither party would return calls on the spot, but I trust more charitable thoughts will prevail.

TECHNICAL problems kept BT Alex Brown, which I persist in thinking of as NatWest but never mind, out of commission for 45 minutes after the markets opened yesterday morning. What went wrong? The server went down and it took something over half an hour to reboot, someone told me. I think he meant the computers didn't work.

Local difficulty

AS DAVID MONTGOMERY'S troubles at Mirror Group worsen, and I cannot find anyone who has worked



with him with anything but the deepest sympathy — I come across an invitation for a drinks do with the regional press on Thursday. Under the same roof will be Philip Graf of Trinity, which tried to buy Mirror, Chris Oakley of Regional Independent Media, the current bidder, and John Allwood, who runs Mirror Group's local papers and so could even take over from Monty. So at least one should end up running the company. Also there is Charles Brims of Portsmouth & Sunderland, subject to a hostile takeover bid. What will they find to talk about?

Number game

IT HAS long been an open secret that Bass wants to control British soft drinks business. But a deal has been

frustrated by the complex ownership structure — Allied Domecq and Whitbread each own almost a quarter, Bass owns almost half and there is even a small stake for PepsiCo. Now we hear of talks for Bass to buy Allied's holding. The latter wants to sell but has never been quite sure what its stake is worth.

Allied has a new finance director, Philip Bowman. It has been suggested to me that this makes it easier for Allied to work out the numbers and ensure a fair price. Bowman used to be finance director at Bass.

A FIELD day for geologists at the Oneworld alliance of BA and four other airlines. No one can agree on what to call their frequent-flier programmes.

BA's top customers are gold. American Airlines goes platinum, Cathay Pacific gives diamonds to its best friends... why does one get the impression that the marketing men have been involved? As a result, Oneworld has had to bring in yet another range of categories, from emerald through sapphire to ruby for the real plebs. At least they didn't follow the example of the Greek national airline, which recently named its frequent-fliers club *Icarus*.

Boat people

A REUNION yesterday for Martin Gilbert, chief executive of Aberdeen Asset Management, and Donald MacDonald, who was in charge of

the Oxford crew for the 1987 Boat Race, the most famous of recent years, the one when the American crew mutinied. Aberdeen has just emerged as the new sponsor for the Boat Race. Gilbert used to meet MacDonald on the cricket and rugby pitch when each played for their respective Scottish schools.

They have, however, run across each other since. MacDonald now works for Aon after the insurer bought Alexander Clay in 1997. Aon is Aberdeen's insurer.

MARTIN WALLER

city.diary@the-times.co.uk



Sticking an oar in: Martin Gilbert, left, with Donald MacDonald

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32 UNIT TRUST PRICES

[illegible]

[illegible]

1998		1997		1996		1995		1994		1993		1992		1991		1990	
Rank	Company	Price	%	Rank	Company	Price	%	Rank	Company	Price	%	Rank	Company	Price	%	Rank	Company
1	Wm. Wrigley	70	11	1	Wm. Wrigley	68	10	1	Wm. Wrigley	65	9	1	Wm. Wrigley	62	8	1	Wm. Wrigley
2	Am. Tobacco	65	10	2	Am. Tobacco	63	9	2	Am. Tobacco	60	8	2	Am. Tobacco	58	7	2	Am. Tobacco
3	Am. Tobacco	60	9	3	Am. Tobacco	58	8	3	Am. Tobacco	55	7	3	Am. Tobacco	53	6	3	Am. Tobacco
4	Am. Tobacco	55	8	4	Am. Tobacco	53	7	4	Am. Tobacco	50	6	4	Am. Tobacco	48	5	4	Am. Tobacco
5	Am. Tobacco	50	7	5	Am. Tobacco	48	6	5	Am. Tobacco	45	5	5	Am. Tobacco	43	4	5	Am. Tobacco
6	Am. Tobacco	45	6	6	Am. Tobacco	43	5	6	Am. Tobacco	40	4	6	Am. Tobacco	38	3	6	Am. Tobacco
7	Am. Tobacco	40	5	7	Am. Tobacco	38	4	7	Am. Tobacco	35	3	7	Am. Tobacco	33	2	7	Am. Tobacco
8	Am. Tobacco	35	4	8	Am. Tobacco	33	3	8	Am. Tobacco	30	2	8	Am. Tobacco	28	1	8	Am. Tobacco
9	Am. Tobacco	30	3	9	Am. Tobacco	28	2	9	Am. Tobacco	25	1	9	Am. Tobacco	23	0	9	Am. Tobacco
10	Am. Tobacco	25	2	10	Am. Tobacco	23	1	10	Am. Tobacco	20	0	10	Am. Tobacco	18	-1	10	Am. Tobacco
11	Am. Tobacco	20	1	11	Am. Tobacco	18	0	11	Am. Tobacco	15	-1	11	Am. Tobacco	13	-2	11	Am. Tobacco
12	Am. Tobacco	15	0	12	Am. Tobacco	13	-1	12	Am. Tobacco	10	-2	12	Am. Tobacco	8	-3	12	Am. Tobacco
13	Am. Tobacco	10	-1	13	Am. Tobacco	8	-2	13	Am. Tobacco	5	-3	13	Am. Tobacco	3	-4	13	Am. Tobacco
14	Am. Tobacco	5	-2	14	Am. Tobacco	3	-3	14	Am. Tobacco	0	-4	14	Am. Tobacco	0	-5	14	Am. Tobacco
15	Am. Tobacco	0	-3	15	Am. Tobacco	0	-4	15	Am. Tobacco	-3	-5	15	Am. Tobacco	-5	-6	15	Am. Tobacco
16	Am. Tobacco	-3	-4	16	Am. Tobacco	-5	-5	16	Am. Tobacco	-8	-6	16	Am. Tobacco	-10	-7	16	Am. Tobacco
17	Am. Tobacco	-5	-5	17	Am. Tobacco	-8	-6	17	Am. Tobacco	-11	-7	17	Am. Tobacco	-13	-8	17	Am. Tobacco
18	Am. Tobacco	-8	-6	18	Am. Tobacco	-11	-7	18	Am. Tobacco	-14	-8	18	Am. Tobacco	-16	-9	18	Am. Tobacco
19	Am. Tobacco	-11	-7	19	Am. Tobacco	-14	-8	19	Am. Tobacco	-17	-9	19	Am. Tobacco	-19	-10	19	Am. Tobacco
20	Am. Tobacco	-14	-8	20	Am. Tobacco	-17	-9	20	Am. Tobacco	-20	-10	20	Am. Tobacco	-22	-11	20	Am. Tobacco
21	Am. Tobacco	-17	-9	21	Am. Tobacco	-20	-10	21	Am. Tobacco	-23	-11	21	Am. Tobacco	-25	-12	21	Am. Tobacco
22	Am. Tobacco	-20	-10	22	Am. Tobacco	-23	-11	22	Am. Tobacco	-26	-12	22	Am. Tobacco	-28	-13	22	Am. Tobacco
23	Am. Tobacco	-23	-11	23	Am. Tobacco	-26	-12	23	Am. Tobacco	-29	-13	23	Am. Tobacco	-31	-14	23	Am. Tobacco
24	Am. Tobacco	-26	-12	24	Am. Tobacco	-29	-13	24	Am. Tobacco	-32	-14	24	Am. Tobacco	-34	-15	24	Am. Tobacco
25	Am. Tobacco	-29	-13	25	Am. Tobacco	-32	-14	25	Am. Tobacco	-35	-15	25	Am. Tobacco	-37	-16	25	Am. Tobacco
26	Am. Tobacco	-32	-14	26	Am. Tobacco	-35	-15	26	Am. Tobacco	-38	-16	26	Am. Tobacco	-40	-17	26	Am. Tobacco
27	Am. Tobacco	-35	-15	27	Am. Tobacco	-38	-16	27	Am. Tobacco	-41	-17	27	Am. Tobacco	-43	-18	27	Am. Tobacco
28	Am. Tobacco	-38	-16	28	Am. Tobacco	-41	-17	28	Am. Tobacco	-44	-18	28	Am. Tobacco	-46	-19	28	Am. Tobacco
29	Am. Tobacco	-41	-17	29	Am. Tobacco	-44	-18	29	Am. Tobacco	-47	-19	29	Am. Tobacco	-49	-20	29	Am. Tobacco
30	Am. Tobacco	-44	-18	30	Am. Tobacco	-47	-19	30	Am. Tobacco	-50	-20	30	Am. Tobacco	-52	-21	30	Am. Tobacco
31	Am. Tobacco	-47	-19	31	Am. Tobacco	-50	-20	31	Am. Tobacco	-53	-21	31	Am. Tobacco	-55	-22	31	Am. Tobacco
32	Am. Tobacco	-50	-20	32	Am. Tobacco	-53	-21	32	Am. Tobacco	-56	-22	32	Am. Tobacco	-58	-23	32	Am. Tobacco
33	Am. Tobacco	-53	-21	33	Am. Tobacco	-56	-22	33	Am. Tobacco	-59	-23	33	Am. Tobacco	-61	-24	33	Am. Tobacco
34	Am. Tobacco	-56	-22	34	Am. Tobacco	-59	-23	34	Am. Tobacco	-62	-24	34	Am. Tobacco	-64	-25	34	Am. Tobacco
35	Am. Tobacco	-59	-23	35	Am. Tobacco	-62	-24	35	Am. Tobacco	-65	-25	35	Am. Tobacco	-67	-26	35	Am. Tobacco
36	Am. Tobacco	-62	-24	36	Am. Tobacco	-65	-25	36	Am. Tobacco	-68	-26	36	Am. Tobacco	-70	-27	36	Am. Tobacco
37	Am. Tobacco	-65	-25	37	Am. Tobacco	-68	-26	37	Am. Tobacco	-71	-27	37	Am. Tobacco	-73	-28	37	Am. Tobacco
38	Am. Tobacco	-68	-26	38	Am. Tobacco	-71	-27	38	Am. Tobacco	-74	-28	38	Am. Tobacco	-76	-29	38	Am. Tobacco
39	Am. Tobacco	-71	-27	39	Am. Tobacco	-74	-28	39	Am. Tobacco	-77	-29	39	Am. Tobacco	-79	-30	39	Am. Tobacco
40	Am. Tobacco	-74	-28	40	Am. Tobacco	-77	-29	40	Am. Tobacco	-80	-30	40	Am. Tobacco	-82	-31	40	Am. Tobacco
41	Am. Tobacco	-77	-29	41	Am. Tobacco	-80	-30	41	Am. Tobacco	-83	-31	41	Am. Tobacco	-85	-32	41	Am. Tobacco
42	Am. Tobacco	-80	-30	42	Am. Tobacco	-83	-31	42	Am. Tobacco	-86	-32	42	Am. Tobacco	-88	-33	42	Am. Tobacco
43	Am. Tobacco	-83	-31	43	Am. Tobacco	-86	-32	43	Am. Tobacco	-89	-33	43	Am. Tobacco	-91	-34	43	Am. Tobacco
44	Am. Tobacco	-86	-32	44	Am. Tobacco	-89	-33	44	Am. Tobacco	-92	-34	44	Am. Tobacco	-94	-35	44	Am. Tobacco
45	Am. Tobacco	-89	-33	45	Am. Tobacco	-92	-34	45	Am. Tobacco	-95	-35	45	Am. Tobacco	-97	-36	45	Am. Tobacco
46	Am. Tobacco	-92	-34	46	Am. Tobacco	-95	-35	46	Am. Tobacco	-98	-36	46	Am. Tobacco	-100	-37	46	Am. Tobacco
47	Am. Tobacco	-95	-35	47	Am. Tobacco	-98	-36	47	Am. Tobacco	-101	-37	47	Am. Tobacco	-103	-38	47	Am. Tobacco
48	Am. Tobacco	-98	-36	48	Am. Tobacco	-101	-37	48	Am. Tobacco	-104	-38	48	Am. Tobacco	-106	-39	48	Am. Tobacco
49	Am. Tobacco	-101	-37	49	Am. Tobacco	-104	-38	49	Am. Tobacco	-107	-39	49	Am. Tobacco	-109	-40	49	Am. Tobacco
50	Am. Tobacco	-104	-38	50	Am. Tobacco	-107	-39	50	Am. Tobacco	-110	-40	50	Am. Tobacco	-112	-41	50	Am. Tobacco
51	Am. Tobacco	-107	-39	51	Am. Tobacco	-110	-40	51	Am. Tobacco	-113	-41	51	Am. Tobacco	-115	-42	51	Am. Tobacco
52	Am. Tobacco	-110	-40	52	Am. Tobacco	-113	-41	52	Am. Tobacco	-116	-42	52	Am. Tobacco	-118	-43	52	Am. Tobacco
53	Am. Tobacco	-113	-41	53	Am. Tobacco	-116	-42	53	Am. Tobacco	-119	-43	53	Am. Tobacco	-121	-44	53	Am. Tobacco
54	Am. Tobacco	-116	-42	54	Am. Tobacco	-119	-43	54	Am. Tobacco	-122	-44	54	Am. Tobacco	-124	-45	54	Am. Tobacco
55	Am. Tobacco	-119	-43	55	Am. Tobacco	-122	-44	55	Am. Tobacco	-125	-45	55	Am. Tobacco	-127	-46	55	Am. Tobacco
56	Am. Tobacco	-122	-44	56	Am. Tobacco	-125	-45	56	Am. Tobacco	-128	-46	56	Am. Tobacco	-130	-47	56	Am. Tobacco
57	Am. Tobacco	-125	-45	57	Am. Tobacco	-128	-46	57	Am. Tobacco	-131	-47	57	Am. Tobacco	-133	-48	57	Am. Tobacco
58	Am. Tobacco	-128	-46	58	Am. Tobacco	-131	-47	58	Am. Tobacco	-134	-48	58	Am. Tobacco	-136	-49	58	Am. Tobacco
59	Am. Tobacco	-131	-47	59	Am. Tobacco	-134	-48	59	Am. Tobacco	-137	-49	59	Am. Tobacco	-139	-50	59	Am. Tobacco
60	Am. Tobacco	-134	-48	60	Am. Tobacco	-137	-49	60	Am. Tobacco	-140	-50	60	Am. Tobacco	-142	-51	60	Am. Tobacco
61	Am. Tobacco	-137	-49	61	Am. Tobacco	-140	-50	61	Am. Tobacco	-143	-51	61	Am. Tobacco	-145	-52	61	Am. Tobacco
62	Am. Tobacco	-140	-50	62	Am. Tobacco	-143	-51	62	Am. Tobacco	-146	-52	62	Am. Tobacco	-148	-53	62	Am. Tobacco
63	Am. Tobacco	-143	-51	63	Am. Tobacco	-146	-52	63	Am. Tobacco	-149	-53	63	Am. Tobacco	-151	-54	63	Am. Tobacco
64	Am. Tobacco	-146	-52	64	Am. Tobacco	-149	-53	64	Am. Tobacco	-152	-54	64	Am. Tobacco	-154	-55	64	Am. Tobacco
65	Am. Tobacco	-149	-53	65	Am. Tobacco	-152	-54	65	Am. Tobacco	-155	-55	65	Am. Tobacco	-157	-56	65	Am. Tobacco
66	Am. Tobacco	-152	-54	66	Am. Tobacco	-155	-55	66	Am. Tobacco	-158	-56	66	Am. Tobacco	-160	-57	66	Am. Tobacco
67	Am. Tobacco	-155	-55	67	Am. Tobacco	-158	-56	67	Am. Tobacco	-161	-57	67	Am. Tobacco	-163	-58	67	Am. Tobacco
68	Am. Tobacco	-158	-56	68	Am. Tobacco	-161	-57	68	Am. Tobacco	-164	-58	68	Am. Tobacco	-166	-59	68	Am. Tobacco
69	Am. Tobacco	-161	-57	69	Am. Tobacco	-164	-58	69	Am. Tobacco	-167	-59	69	Am. Tobacco	-169	-60	69	Am. Tobacco
70	Am. Tobacco	-164	-58	70	Am. Tobacco	-167	-59	70	Am. Tobacco	-170	-60	70	Am. Tobacco	-172	-61	70	Am. Tobacco
71	Am. Tobacco	-167	-59	71	Am. Tobacco	-170	-60	71	Am. Tobacco	-173	-61	71	Am. Tobacco	-175	-62	71	Am. Tobacco
72	Am. Tobacco	-170	-60	72	Am. Tobacco	-173	-61	72	Am. Tobacco	-176	-62	72	Am. Tobacco	-178	-63	72	Am. Tobacco
73	Am. Tobacco	-173	-61	73	Am. Tobacco	-176	-62	73	Am. Tobacco	-179	-63	73	Am. Tobacco	-181	-64	73	Am. Tobacco
74	Am. Tobacco	-176	-62	74	Am. Tobacco	-179	-63	74	Am. Tobacco	-182	-64	74	Am. Tobacco	-184	-65	74	Am. Tobacco
75	Am. Tobacco	-179	-63	75	Am. Tobacco	-182	-64	75	Am. Tobacco	-185	-65	75	Am. Tobacco	-187	-66	75	Am. Tobacco
76	Am. Tobacco	-182	-64	76	Am. Tobacco	-185	-65	76	Am. Tobacco	-188	-66	76	Am. Tobacco	-190	-67	76	Am. Tobacco
77	Am. Tobacco	-185	-65	77	Am. Tobacco	-188	-66	77	Am. Tobacco	-191	-67	77	Am. Tobacco	-193	-68	77	Am. Tobacco
78	Am. Tobacco	-188	-66	78	Am. Tobacco	-191	-67	78	Am. Tobacco	-194	-68	78	Am. Tobacco	-196	-69	78	Am. Tobacco
79	Am. Tobacco	-191	-67	79	Am. Tobacco	-194	-68	79	Am. Tobacco	-197	-69	79	Am. Tobacco	-199	-70	79	Am. Tobacco
80	Am. Tobacco	-194	-68	80	Am. Tobacco	-197	-69	80	Am. Tobacco	-200	-70	80	Am. Tobacco	-202	-71	80	Am. Tobacco
81	Am. Tobacco	-197	-69	81	Am. Tobacco	-200	-70	81	Am. Tobacco	-203	-71	81	Am. Tobacco	-205	-72	81	Am. Tobacco
82	Am. Tobacco	-200	-70	82	Am. Tobacco	-203	-71	82	Am. Tobacco	-206	-72	82	Am. Tobacco	-208	-73	82	Am. Tobacco
83	Am. Tobacco	-203	-71	83	Am. Tobacco	-206	-72	83	Am. Tobacco	-209	-73	83	Am. Tobacco	-211	-74	83	Am. Tobacco
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85	Am. Tobacco	-209	-73	85	Am. Tobacco	-212	-74	85	Am. Tobacco	-215	-75	85	Am. Tobacco	-217	-76	85	Am. Tobacco
86	Am. Tobacco	-212	-74	86	Am. Tobacco	-215	-75	86	Am. Tobacco	-218	-76	86	Am. Tobacco	-220	-77	86	Am. Tobacco
87	Am. Tobacco	-215	-75	87	Am. Tobacco	-218	-76	87	Am. Tobacco	-221	-77	87	Am. Tobacco	-223	-78	87	Am. Tobacco
88	Am. Tobacco	-218	-76	88	Am. Tobacco	-221	-77	88	Am. Tobacco	-224	-78	88	Am. Tobacco	-226	-79	88	Am. Tobacco
89	Am. Tobacco	-221	-77	89	Am. Tobacco	-224	-78	89	Am. Tobacco	-227	-79	89	Am. Tobacco	-229	-80	89	Am. Tobacco
90	Am. Tobacco	-224	-78	90	Am. Tobacco	-227	-79	90	Am. Tobacco	-230	-80	90					

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	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	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PRINTING & PAPER									
645	278	401	412	40	58	8	18	10	10
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650	283	406	417	1	1	1	1	1	1
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653	286	409	420	1	1	1	1	1	1
654	287	410	421	1	1	1	1	1	1
655	288	411	422	1	1	1	1	1	1
656	289	412	423	1	1	1	1	1	1
657	290	413	424	1	1	1	1	1	1
658	291	414	425	1	1	1	1	1	1
659	292	415	426	1	1	1	1	1	1
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676	309	432	443	1	1	1	1	1	1
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678	311	434	445	1	1	1	1	1	1
679	312	435	446	1	1	1	1	1	1
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681	314	437	448	1	1	1	1	1	1
682	315	438	449	1	1	1	1	1	1
683	316	439	450	1	1	1	1	1	1
684	317	440	451	1	1	1	1	1	1
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704	337	460	471	1	1	1	1	1	1
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707	340	463	474	1	1	1	1	1	1
708	341	464	475	1	1	1	1	1	1
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815	448	571	582	1	1	1	1	1	1
816	449	572	583	1	1				

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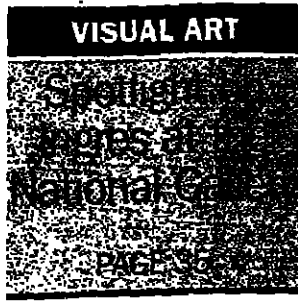
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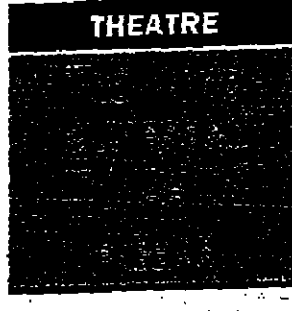
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THE TIMES ARTS



Actor Jeremy Northam has made it in Hollywood. So what's he doing at the Almeida — slumming? Matt Wolf reports

Jeremy Northam is on the verge of becoming such a ubiquitous cinema presence that one is slightly surprised to find Sandra Bullock's erstwhile co-star in *The Net* sipping coffee in the Almeida Theatre bar preparing for notes from his current play's writer-director, Peter Gill.

The same weekend might instead have found Northam in New York promoting the premiere of *Gloria*, the Sidney Lumet film in which he appears opposite Sharon Stone, or even in Utah at the Sundance Festival, where Northam and the American actor Steve Zahn are generating a terrific buzz as escapers from a chain gang in the independent film *Happy Texas*. In addition, Northam will be seen this year in two screen adaptations of period plays: Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy*, written and directed by David Mamet, and alongside Cate Blanchett and Minnie Driver in the director Oliver Parker's youthful rethinking of Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*, both of which cast Northam as establishment figures who may be less stiff-backed than they appear. Also awaiting release is a Sundance entry from last year, *The Misadventures of Margaret*, with Northam as a professor married to Parker Posey's neurotic novelist.

"This is what I've been waiting for," Northam says of the celluloid onslaught, purple sunglasses his only vague nod to the burgeoning film renown that may at last position the 37-year-old actor as a Hugh Grant or Ralph Fiennes-level star. And yet, far from hoping the Atlantic, the actor has chosen to return to the theatre for his first stage appearance since *The Country Wife* for the Royal Shakespeare Company four and a half years ago.

What's more, he arrives not as a visiting film star in the Almeida tradition of Kevin Spacey, Juliette Binoche and Liam Neeson, but as one of the eight-person ensemble of Gill's new play, *Certain Young Men*, in which Northam plays David, a gay obstetrician uneasily partnered with Andrew Woodall's married Christopher.

"I grew up within that aesthetic," Northam says of the company feel of the play,



"I got into acting because I like plays," says Jeremy Northam, who is now doing just that in London. But with five new films featuring Northam heading our way, the British actor will soon be on a screen near you

Enter, pursued by fame

which exists in notable contrast to a film career mainly spent playing male second banana to a motley parade of high-powered women, including Bullock, Stone, Mira Sorvino (the critically reviled *Mimic*) and Gwyneth Paltrow (the critically praised *Emma*).

"I got into acting because I like plays. It's nice, too, not to have the pressure of 'How's the weekend box office?' The joy of just doing something like this simply and directly and, you hope, skilfully — without those other pressures

— is really quite refreshing." Besides, he adds, "the people who do plays who are perceived as movie stars all come from a very strong theatrical background."

That's certainly true of Northam, who left two years into drama training at Bristol to take a job in Nottingham. Further regional theatre work followed before a career-making stint at the National Theatre, where he won a 1990 Olivier Award for his performance in Richard Eyre's staging of *The Voyage Inheritance* and

played no fewer than three parts at varying times in the same director's *Hamlet*. Indeed, he stepped into the role one fateful night in September, 1989, when Daniel Day-Lewis had a breakdown and left the stage.

Northam looks back on the traumatic evening as "ancient history", which it probably is compared to wooing — and stalking — Bullock in *The Net*. "I could never have imagined that I would be performing opposite these icons, these movie stars, who are all totally differ-

ent; it all came as a total surprise, really."

Their presence has meant he has yet to bear the burden for the films' variable commercial fates. "I wouldn't be responsible in the public eye, because I'm not Sharon or Mira or Gwyneth. But of course you put a lot of time and effort into doing what you do, and you would much rather be associated with things which are happy successes."

If advance word is any gauge, both *The Winslow Boy*

and *An Ideal Husband* are set to be exactly that, which looks to be especially pleasing in view of the latter film's insofar as Northam came late to the cast as a last-minute replacement for Gabriel Byrne. "I got back on a plane from Los Angeles, and a day later I was in a readthrough," the actor says of his role as Sir Robert Chiltern, the ideal husband of Wilde's title. "I went from playing an escaped convict in *Happy Texas* to a politician with a dodgy past."

Still, it is hardly required est-

quette that has Northam enthusing about his current play. "What has been so brilliant is the way Peter Gill does things and demands things of his actors — even as he dismisses any sense of noblesse oblige about a performer appearing for a fraction of his usual fee. People talk about you earning £250 a week like Nicole Kidman as if it's a badge of honour, and that makes me fed up because for most people in the business, that is a good wage and that's all you get."

"I'm not doing this to wear clothes of penitence and go 'Oh, I have to be a masochist for a while'. I'm doing it because it's not often that you're involved in the creation of something, as I was with this seven years ago [in workshop]."

In any case, Northam has hardly gone Hollywood: he continues to live, for example, in North London. "I remember feeling at various times annoyed at the assumption that one was deeply ambitious. What you hope for is to play the parts you want to play, to be a part of the industry that you wanted to be a part of. I'm ambitious to be a better actor."

● *Certain Young Men* opens tomorrow night at the Almeida, London N1 (0171-359 4404). *An Ideal Husband* is released in Britain on April 16

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VERDI'S REQUIEM
Reviewed by
Humphrey Burton

FOR every great performer (and for every recording engineer, one might add, since the work's dynamic range is exceptional) the Verdi Requiem is an Everest waiting to be climbed. Even more universal in its appeal than the Missa Solemnis or the Requiems of Brahms and Berlioz, Verdi's 90-minute masterpiece is the greatest religious composition of the 19th century.

Completed in 1874, it was the agnostic Verdi's outpouring of deep-felt grief following the death of Italy's most beloved poet, Matthew. Each of the four soloists has several long solos which are every bit as intense and demanding as an operatic aria, although Verdi insisted that "one mustn't sing this Mass in the way one sings an opera — therefore phrasing and dynamics that may be fine in the theatre won't please me at all". A quartet of superb artists is nevertheless essential, but they must leave operatic sob and can belt high notes behind them, particularly when

they combine in a taxing but expressive variety of duets, trios and quartets.

The Requiem also demands a chorus of great strength and flexibility, an orchestra of red-blooded virtuosity and a conductor of spirituality and dynamism.

Toscanini conducted the Requiem at Verdi's funeral in 1901 and made a recording 50 years later that, despite its boxy sound, still represents the authentic tradition. Conducting giants of every generation since the war have recorded it: Frickey made a brilliant version in Berlin in 1953 (mono but single, mid-priced CD from Deutsche Grammophon); Giulini's 1964 interpretation for EMI (full price and full-blooded) remains one of the best, if you can take Schwarzkopf's breathy delivery, and Barbirolli, recording five years later, has the superb Jon Vickers among his soloists, and the tremendous Philharmonia Chorus.

To order the recommended recording, with free delivery, please send a cheque payable to The Times Music Shop to FREEPOST, SCO681, Forres, IV36 0BR or phone 0345 023 498; e-mail: music@the-times.co.uk

Next Saturday on Radio 3 (11am): Bernstein's West Side Story

Solti's 1967 version, made in Vienna, is wonderfully engineered by Decca but a slightly languid Joan Sutherland lowers the tension. Four modern, digital recordings all have strong selling points. Mud is at La Scala, Abbado at the Vienna State Opera. Two English conductors also work with powerful international casts: Colin Davis — in Munich — for RCA and John Eliot Gardiner, employing period instruments, for Philips. If you won't be happy with anything less than original digital then go for the Davis (remember his compelling Proms performance in 1997). But my final choice is vintage Leonard Bernstein on Sony Classical (SM2K 47639, two CDs, £17.99); the soloists include Domingo plus the LSO and LSO Chorus, remastered from a vivid 1970 performance taped at the Albert Hall. Bernstein has the soul, the heart and the dramatic energy: he inspires an electrifying experience.

Or did it? Something was surely wrong when such a fascinating programme could still leave the listener none the wiser about Goethe himself. His texts became just the thread connecting this series of masterpieces and rarities by his composer contemporaries. No exploration of his musical appeal was attempted. Given the vast body of Lieder and operas he inspired, the choral works featured here were hardly put into context.

Purely on a performance level, though, this was an evening full of excitement. The Corydon forces have made German Romantic music a speciality, but they seemed to surprise both themselves and the audience with the power of Mendelssohn's neglected *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*. From

the start of a substantial overture, this half-hour cantata is full of unfettered lyricism, but it is not all Mendelssohnian sweetness and light: the witches' sabbath at its centre has the orchestra shrieking and growling, and the pagans have nothing of the religious respectability that often creeps into Mendelssohn's choral music.

Best account caught all of this freshness and vigour, making it clear why Berlioz, for one, thought the score "the

finest thing Mendelssohn has done". The chorus was lively and the soloists strong. Timothy Robinson displayed a ringing tenor as the Druid, Michael George was solemn as the Priest and Jean Rigby

bursts of the first movement. To some extent the unflattering acoustics of the Festival Hall exaggerated the harsh orchestral sound, and caused unbalanced timbres at the beginning to seem even more startling than probably intended. Yet it was fair preparation for the starkness of what was to follow: a reading in which the shadows that fall across the main material seemed darker than ever. Given that the middle movements are both laden with more or less grotesque irony, it was a reasonable strategy of Haitink's to differentiate clearly between them.

The Ländler second movement, marked "somewhat clumsy and very coarse", with peasant dancing that should sound "ponderous" or "heavy-footed", according to the score, was indeed delivered with a very deliberate rhythmic tread. Done this way, the trills on woodwind, and especially horns, had an unsettlingly leering quality.

The Rondo Burleske third movement, on the other hand, was a whirlwind of hyperactivity, seething with energy and dispatched with virtuosity. All this leads, of course, to the sublimely valedictory hymn of the great Adagio finale. For all that the earlier movements signalled a new approach, Haitink is not a man to revel in sentimentality. True to his nature, it was not a finale of overt emotionalism, but a noble farewell, not without passion, yet sober and restrained.

CONCERTS

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had a fine presence as the Old Woman.

To most music lovers, *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* also implies Mendelssohn, but here we were treated to Beethoven's seldom heard choral setting of the Goethe poems. Notable for its vivid pictorialism and occasional anticipations of the Ninth Symphony, the score inspired alert, upfront singing from the choir. They had warmth, too, in Schumann's *Requiem für Migi-*

ron, where the most ravishing music is reserved for a quartet of women, sung with distinction by members of the choir.

Two well-known works completed the programme. The orchestra revelled in Beethoven's *Egmont* overture, moving from a soft-grained opening to a blazing close, and Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* found Jean Rigby on glowing form.

JOHN ALLISON

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VISUAL ART: Ingres could paint men but they were never his real inspiration, as Richard Cork discovers at the National Gallery

No sooner has late Monet settled into the Royal Academy than another, equally rewarding French painter arrives at the National Gallery. But these two magnificent shows could hardly offer a greater contrast. No people can be discerned in Monet's infatuated images of his garden, whereas Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was a supreme painter of portraits. With lofty disdain, he pretended that history painting was his true calling. But Ingres is always at his finest when faced with a sitter, so the National Gallery is right to concentrate on portraiture and leave his pompous, often absurd allegories alone.

Just how overblown they can be is suggested by the first exhibit to confront us: a towering and marmoreal effigy of Napoleon I on his Imperial Throne. Executed by the young Ingres as a precocious showpiece in 1806, it presents the newly laurelled Emperor as a blanded, implacable despot. Resting his gold-encrusted foot on a velvet cushion, itself emblazoned with the imperial eagle, Napoleon displays his fearsome authority. Clasp the sceptre of Charles V like a vicious spear, he allows Charlemagne's hand of justice to rest against his left thigh. Posed frontally, with a rigid hauteur that reflects Napoleon's appetite for unchallenged power, this severe apparition seems as remote from the modern world as a medieval icon.

Mercifully, though, the glacial Emperor remains an exception among Ingres' portraits. He was equally capable, only a year earlier, of making Madame Rivière into one of his most sensual images. With youthful audacity, Ingres turns his sitter into a sequence of swooping, whirling undulations. Treating the oval canvas as a flat surface, he allows limbs and draperies to flow across it with virtuosic élan. The ringleted Mme Rivière somehow maintains an imperturbable poise, while all around her extravagant linear inventions leap, coil and tumble. The veil, surging from her head, no less than the embroidered shawl twisting in fantastic convolutions around her

elongated arm, have an almost orgasmic abandon. For all its bravura, the Rivière portrait was received with disapproval in Paris. Jacques-Louis David, Ingres' coolly Neo-Classical master, would never have allowed himself to indulge in such an unbridled display. For the moment, Ingres had to remain content with building a localised reputation in Rome. Here he was able to study his idolised Raphael at will, dreaming already of the grandiose apotheosis he would execute later in life. But he also had the good sense to embark on a portrait as superlative as the half-length of François-Marius Granet, a landscape painter and close friend.

If anyone had doubted Ingres' ability to respond to men with the fervour he bestowed on women, the Granet portrait settled the question. Dressed in a rich brown cloak, which gives the design its pyramidal firmness, the young man clasps his sketchbook against a backdrop of the Quirinale. The buildings are painted with an eye for flattened, cubic simplification that anticipates views of hilltop Provençal villages by Cézanne, who knew the Granet portrait well in his local museum at Aix. But Ingres counters this structural austerity by giving his handsome sitter nervous, sidelong-glancing eyes and wind-tousled hair. Tense with unattained, youthful ambition, Granet is pitched against a thunderous sky that reinforces his troubled mood. For all its debt to Classicism, this complex image shows how Romantic unrest was waiting to burst out of the ordered framework.

Ingres never permitted his need for control to be overpowered by an onrush of unchecked feeling. But the turbulence beneath the surface rigour cannot be doubted, lending even his slightest portrait a powerful sense of tension. The pencil drawings he made in such profusion, largely to support himself after the collapse of his Napoleonic supporters in Rome, possess a palpable intensity. Adept at summarising his mainly British clients with con-

summate skill, he rose above mere flattery and proved that an effortless command of line lies at the very centre of his art. Whether drawing an elegant, painstaking elaboration. Because the pigment in his portrait of the Baron de Norvins has become worn, we can detect some of the changes Ingres introduced as the picture proceeded. The outcome, however, is the very opposite of laboured. Contrasted with a shimmering wall-cover and

curtain of near-Venetian sensuousness, the Director of the Police cuts a sober, monochromatic figure. Although his white shirt threatens to spurt out from his lapel, its unexpected frothiness is contained within the severity of a jet-black coat. This is a man professionally accustomed to suspicion, and his stiff body refuses to lean back against the damask-draped chair where he sits with such vigilance.

As Ingres grew older, and found himself plied with commissions from wealthy society ladies in Paris, he allowed the reins more licence. Steadfastly monogamous in his own marriage, he nevertheless gave himself up to erotic indulgence in the realm of painting. When confronted by the heady languor of Madame de Senonnes in 1814, he revealed the extent of his willingness to be seduced. Viewed slightly from

above, so that her breasts are shown to ample advantage, the hothouse creature relaxes on sumptuous, gleaming fabrics. The sitter looks up, her unmarked oval face calm above the spume of a triple-layered lace collar. Pale satin eruptions break out, at provocative intervals, along the surface of her wine-red velvet dress. No fewer than 13 rings can be counted on her fleshy fingers, and Ingres is bold enough to

sign his name on a calling card stuffed into the edge of the mirror behind her. This expanse of glass, the first to appear in an Ingres portrait, reflects the back of Mme de Senonnes' head. Shadowy and tantalising, it introduces an element of mystery after the brazen allure displayed by the woman in front of the mirror. Ingres deepens the enigma by making the rest of the glass surprisingly dark, and allowing it to spread over a large area of the painting's unfathomable upper section.

The great female portraits that crown Ingres' later career give glass a still more mesmerising role. The Vicomtesse d'Haussonville, far more alert and appraising than the indolent Mme de Senonnes, leans back against a mantelpiece surmounted by a grand mirror. With one distended figure propping up her chin, echoing a pose adopted by the Greek muse Polyhymnia, she gazes through crescent-shaped eyes in an abstracted manner. Her luxurious accoutrements do not seem to satisfy the young woman, who would later publish several historical romances. She seems a little restless, as if dissatisfied with her leisurely existence. And the prominent reflection of her head and shoulders stresses the young woman's solitude, enveloping her with the unknown-

'The hothouse creature relaxes on sumptuous fabric'

ble emptiness of the dark glass.

The mirror image is deployed most somberly of all in the grand final version of Madame Moitessier's two portraits. An earlier, redoubtable three-quarter length of this fashionable hostess shows her standing, arrayed in black and toying with a rope of pearls against a flat, damask-covered wall. She is expressionless, and her detachment is accentuated by the garland of lush roses dangling from her sculpted hair. They give her the aura of a remote goddess, accustomed to receiving adoration without betraying a scintilla of excitement.

The same curious blend of antiquity and modernity can be found in the later Moitessier portrait. The opposition between them, however, is now heightened. Seated, she allows a flower-spattered Second Empire dress to billow across the lower half of the painting. She appears to float on this sea of petals, and Matisse would have savoured Ingres' willingness to give these opulent patterns such a strong pictorial presence. Once again, Moitessier is removed from her nouveau riche context and given an antique gravity. The wide mirror behind confirms this dimension, by presenting her in shadowy profile as a Sphinx-like enigma. This time, though, the reflected image seems to be turning into stone. Her stillness is close to death, mocking the woman's finery and beguelling satisfaction even as Ingres bestows immortality upon her.

Portraits by Ingres at the National Gallery (0171-839 3321) until April 25



Dark glasses in his great portrait of Vicomtesse d'Haussonville, Ingres once again allows a mirror to play a mesmerising role, emphasising her solitude

AROUND THE LONDON GALLERIES

DECADENCE is a queasy concept; easier to sense than it is to define. It glitters, alluring yet repulsive, like the gloss of bright colours on decaying

meat. Decadence is the Roman Emperor Commodus; ravaging then slaying virgins. It is Evelyn Waugh's tortoise with a diamond-encrusted

shell. It is cruelty and high camp, opulence and consumption. "It is the rottenness from which all life springs," said Germaine Greer.

But most of all decadence is defined by its era, which is why the Crafts Council has chosen this cusp of the century to mount a show which explores decadence over the past decade. The sumptuous display of jewellery and textiles, sculpture and ceramics, glass and furniture, tantalises. The rich mix of media and ideas fascinates. It is hard for the eye to settle at first.

In the corner of a chamber, draped in dark velvet, a polished black leonard spirals to his doom. His wings, quilled with mirrors, catch myriad glancing reflections of light. This is Andrew Logan's interpretation of the theme: a glitzy glory before the moment of death. Other works are more sinister. Seen from a distance, Andy Frazell's wall clock may look like a nursery ornament. But examine it more closely and you see a slaughterhouse scene.

Each exhibit deserves such fastidious inspection. A cornucopia, woven from ivy and leaves and moss, beaded with berries and old-man's beard, is not a symbol of bountiful nature. Discarded Fanta cans and crumpled crisp packets overspill the lip. And inside the ceramic rim, rippled like fungus, a scaly tentacle lurks.



Decadent? Andrew Logan's *Icarus* at the Crafts Council

Texture and pattern, design and detail, are the essence of this show, whether seen in the minimalist elegance of a John Makepeace cabinet, or the gilded decorations of a harpsichord. This show unfurls and

I BUMPED into the artist Peter Blake at the Royal Academy's Monet show. Among all the admirers of this most popular Impressionist, Blake's was an isolated voice of dissent. He didn't like the paintings, he declared, which seemed all the odder at the time because near by was a photograph of the ageing Monet and the similarities in appearance between the two artists were striking. But the clue to their differences lay in their beards. Where Monet's was flowing, Blake's was tightly clipped. And his artistic style has the same taut precision.

Those disheartened by the stretching queues for the Royal Academy might enjoy popping round the corner to see Blake's prints. Here are jolly series of tattooed ladies, brunettes and blondes in bright bikinis. "I wonder where this thing leads to?" cries Robin to Batman, as they slide down the lumpy curve of a thigh. Elvis Presley nestles against a clavicle. Mincefully detailed woodcuts examine the freaks in the circus sideshow, photographs create bewildering theatres in a Regency room. But more usually Blake seems to be caught in the rainbow-hued realm of the Sixties and Seventies. Perhaps his work will come back into fashion again in this retro-obsessed world.

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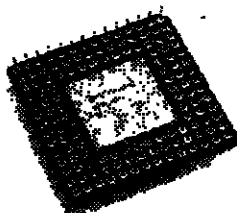
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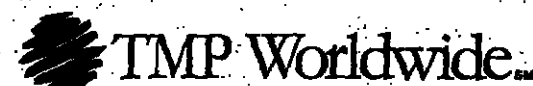
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For richer, for poorer, till law us do part

Marrying in a foreign country can be a tricky affair. Edward Fennell reports

By all means go to the Land where the Bong Tree Grows for your wedding. Just try to make sure that the marriage is not conducted by the Turkey Who Lives on the Hill.

According to Mick Jagger's team, his marriage to Jerry Hall was a turkey from day one because they did not have the right number of witnesses and there was a mix-up in the paperwork. So has Mick known all along that he was upstaged? Or has this defence been unearthed more recently by a bright lawyer who has been investigating the events of the ceremony in Bali?

The basic position in the UK is that an overseas marriage will be valid if both parties had the capacity to marry and the local civil formalities were fully observed. Look beneath that generalisation, however, and the complexity of the issue soon becomes baffling. Even leading authorities

such as Peter George of Charles Russell say this area of international private law can be "like playing multidimensional chess".

David Trux, of the Anglo-Australian practice David Trux and Company, describes the law as extremely complicated. "I'm writing a manual so that high street lawyers can understand the issues," he says. "Frankly, it is very difficult to do."

The upsurge in the number of complex marital disputes reflects increasingly international lives in which place of marriage, husbands and wives, domicile and assets may be scattered across the globe.

Mr Trux explained: "The recently had a case in which an Australian woman married an Irish man and the couple lived initially in Ireland. The marriage broke up and the man went to live in France, the woman in Australia."

"He then petitioned for divorce in England and we had to persuade the English courts that this was not appropriate. So he then got a quickie divorce in Mexico and promptly married someone else, in New York. The authorities there recognised the Mexican divorce, but other countries would not."

Where does that leave the wife? Is she still married? If she decided that she was divorced and then remarried,

would her second marriage be valid? Frankly, the answers may vary from country to country. For example, had she been domiciled in Ireland but had obtained a divorce in Australia, it would not be recognised in Ireland. But it would be recognised in England.

The result, says Katharine Shaw of the family law department at Radcliffe, is that when it comes to divorce, there is an increasing amount of "forum shopping" as lawyers and clients weigh up the pros and cons of where they will launch an action. Some jurisdictions might offer a quicker process, but their rulings might be unenforceable. And if their decisions are not recognised by other significant countries, that may queer the possibility of a future valid marriage.

So while the status of marriages used rarely to be questioned (except in cases of bigamy or non-consummation), there is likely to be a growing number of divorce and inheritance cases that hinge on the issue "Was the marriage valid in the first place?"

And it is not just globetrotting superstars who run up against these problems. Growing prosperity and a sense of adventure have produced a vogue for overseas marriage-cum-holiday packages. Getting married in a bikini on the beach is no longer a problem for specialist companies and big-name travel operators alike, which offer all-in deals complete with "ceremony, marriage and certificate". The operators arrange the details so that "when you arrive at your destination you will have nothing to worry about."

But what if your final destination is the divorce court? Being married by a Buddhist monk on the slopes of Everest may produce great snaps for the family album — but has the monk got the right authorisation from the local civil authorities?

Already a number of holiday companies have made their way to leading travel lawyers to check on how they stand. After all, if a marriage turned out to be invalid, could the disappointed holidaymakers come back for redress?

Peter Steward of Field Fisher Waterhouse is clear on his advice: "I advise travel companies to give the clients the full



Randy Gerber and Cindy Crawford, like thousands of couples, married in an exotic location

facts," he says. "They should suggest that their customers take legal advice first. And they should make it clear that they accept no responsibility for anything that might subsequently go wrong."

Start to investigate the small print, even in England and Wales, and the situation soon becomes complicated. For example, to be declared null, a marriage can be either void or voidable. It will be void, when the parties are within the prohibited degrees of relationship or if either of them is under 16 or if either was already married. It will be voidable if the marriages have not been consummated or if either partner did not validly consent to it or, at the time of the marriage, the respondent was pregnant by some person other than the petitioner.

Then there is the matter of reading the banns in church and of the service being conducted by qualified officiants (rather than a work experience youth — as happened recently in one Anglican church).

For many people, the religious context may be more im-

portant than the civil. All Anglican clergymen ordained for a year can solemnise marriages but for Roman Catholics, Quakers, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, different regulations apply.

Father John Nelson of Portsmouth's Catholic diocese, an expert in canonical law, says that every effort is made to work with the civil authorities. So although the Catholic Church does not recognise a register office wedding, a civil divorce would be required before they could marry again in a Catholic service.

Because of the potential for complexity, there is a growing belief in England and Wales that prenuptial contracts, which are not yet binding in our courts, may offer a way forward. Mr George comments: "To avoid an argument, many people prefer to have a straightforward, enforceable contract." So if you decide to go for the turkey on the hill in the siffron robes, be sure to sign a prenuptial before getting the ring. And make sure your travel agent pre-books the divorce in Mexico.

Skeleton argument that may harm civil justice

In March 1989, Lord Donaldson of Lynton, then Master of the Rolls, made a practice direction introducing a requirement that counsel file a skeleton argument before the hearing of a civil appeal. There is concern among practitioners that the most recent practice direction in this area, which comes fully into effect next Monday, will greatly reduce the value of these skeleton arguments and damage civil justice.

As the 1989 practice direction explained, a skeleton argument is a written summary which identifies the principal points and draws attention to the relevant legal authorities. Its main purpose is to assist the judge to prepare for the hearing, thereby ensuring that the oral argument for the appeal can focus on the central issues in dispute between the parties. This reduces the time spent in court, and limits the costs for litigants and the legal system.

By advancing these objectives, the skeleton argument has been one of the most significant improvements in civil procedure in the past 50 years, and not just in the Court of Appeal. A similar requirement has been imposed in other civil courts.

The 1989 practice direction imposed a deadline for the filing of skeleton arguments of four weeks before a fixed hearing date. In 1990 this was reduced to 14 days. That remained the normal rule until the recent practice direction issued by Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, last November after "consultation with the members of the Court of Appeal", as the direction records. The new standard rule is that the appellant must include a skeleton argument when filing the appeal bundle of documents, within 14 days of the appeal appearing in the list of forthcoming appeals. The respondent must then lodge a reply skeleton argument within 21 days of receipt of the appellant's skeleton argument. This will mean that there is an obligation to prepare and file skeleton arguments at an earlier stage of the appeal proceedings. The date by which an appellant must file a bundle of documents is typically many months before the hearing. In judicial review cases, the skeleton arguments will need to be filed about six months before the appeal is heard. The new practice direction adds that a supplemental or revised skeleton argument may not be lodged without the court's permission, and such permission will be granted only if there is good reason for doing so.

The requirement to file skeleton arguments early in the appeal proceedings is unfortunate. There will be four main disadvantages.

First, because the work will be done so long before the appeal hearing that the skeleton arguments will decline in quality and focus, and will not provide as much assistance to the court as a skeleton argument filed close to the hearing date. No doubt the previous 14-day rule was based on Dr Johnson's principle that "when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully".

Secondly, in areas of the law (such as public law and employment law) where developments are rapid, the skeleton argument will often need amendment by the time of the hearing if it is to address current legal principles. Thirdly, lawyers will now need fully to prepare the case twice, once for the skeleton argument and again for the hearing months later. At present, that occurs only when counsel has to be instructed to obtain leave to appeal, and not where such leave has already been granted by the lower court or tribunal. Appellate litigation will become more expensive for clients.

Fourthly, counsel previously knew when they had a duty to file a skeleton argument because it was based on the hearing date in their diary. The new rule focuses on the date notified to the solicitor for the case entering the list of forthcoming appeals. Counsel will now be dependent on the solicitor giving them that information. Delays in communication will inevitably mean that skeleton arguments will be prepared in even more of a rush than they are at present.

These detriments are not outweighed by any positive benefit from skeleton arguments being filed so much earlier. The judges are not going to read them until just before the hearing of the appeal. The duty to provide a skeleton argument at the early stage is unlikely to deter unmeritorious appeals. The requirement for sequential filing of skeleton arguments is an improvement on the previous procedure by making it more likely that the respondent's documents will answer the one filed by the appellant. But that objective does not require the documents to be presented so long in advance of the hearing date.

Mr Justice Cardozo of the United States Supreme Court gave warning that changes to civil procedure must not "multiply impediments to justice without the warrant of clear necessity". The Court of Appeal should rethink its practice direction.

● The author is a practising barrister and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.



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COULD Robin Cook sue for breach of marital secrets? Peter Carter-Ruck, the libel lawyer, thinks so. "There is a precedent for this," he says — a case in 1967 when the Duchess of Argyll obtained an injunction to stop the Duke, her former husband, and a newspaper, from disclosing marital confidences. The court held that marriage was a relationship of a confidential nature that gave rise to an obligation of confidence. Mr Carter-Ruck adds: "Mr Cook could arguably seek to obtain an injunction to prevent further publication of details of his marriage."

□ The judges are paying their own tribute to Lord Denning for his 100th birthday (see page 43). Lord Woolf, the Master

DIARY

Law. Lord Denning, its president, was a founding member.

□ Bar noses have been put out of joint by the Chilean Government's choice of QC for General Pinochet: the Herbert Smith partner Lawrence Collins, who is one of the first solicitor QCs.

□ The Law Society is desperate for a way out of the profession's negligence insurance crisis. Last week the council debated

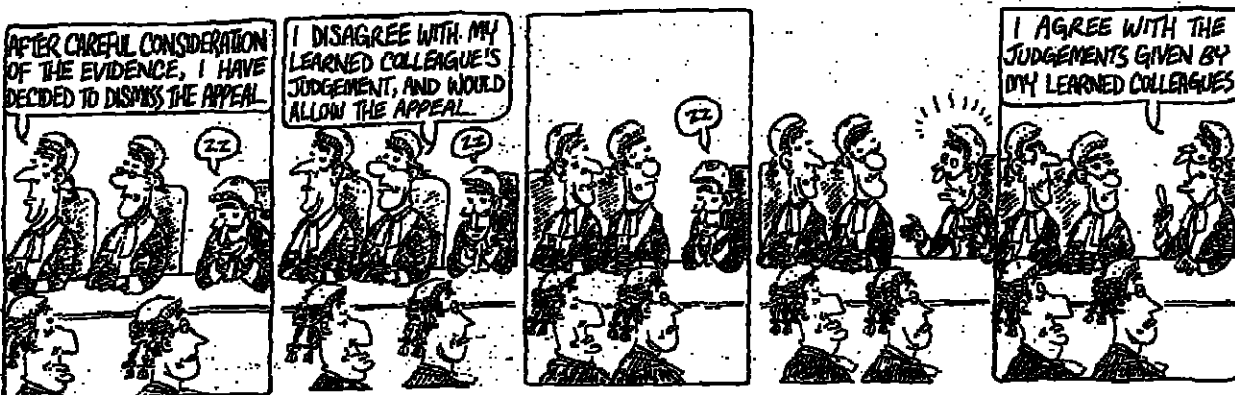
whether to keep the Solicitors' Indemnity Fund or allow firms to obtain insurance on the open market.

Now it is to look at a new idea from the consultancy Aon Risk, which would give firms a choice of the open market or an insurance package devised by the society.

□ Simmons & Simmons is having a tough year. After an exodus of several high-profile partners, Alan Morris, the accountant who was made managing partner in 1996, is leaving before the end of his three-year term, amid speculation that partners are losing confidence in the running of the firm. David Dickinson, managing partner of the banking and capital markets group, was one of only two who went for the job and was victorious. His first task? To stem the flow of partners and get them to stump up £7 million to fit out planned new offices.

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Playing by the rules

Why is the OFT tackling football's Premier League? Report by Richard Prowse

The Restrictive Practices Court is being asked to blow the whistle on the FA Premier League and to show a red card to its lucrative television deals.

In a case brought by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), the UK's competition law watchdog, the Premier League stands accused of operating as an illegal cartel. The alleged offence is the practice of the league's clubs collectively selling their television rights to BSkyB (40 per cent owned by News International, owner of The Times) and the BBC.

The case, which started on January 12, has been surrounded by much rhetoric and confusion. Unusually, we have seen Tony Banks, the Sports Minister, criticising a government of his own. Talk abounds in football circles of the collapse of the Premier League and critics say that the sport as we know it is under threat.

Of course, football is a highly emotive topic at the heart of Britain's culture. But we should all, Tony Banks included, step back and focus realistically on why the OFT has brought the case.

The issue is whether, and how, competition law should apply to sport and what the future holds. The case brought by the OFT is based on a straightforward application of competition rules. If we take a dispassionate view, it is difficult to find fault with the OFT's argument. English Premier League clubs are banding together in order to sell their product, the television rights to FA Carling Premiership football.

From a purely economic and legal stance, this eliminates any competition between them and means that they are able to use their collective muscle to negotiate price and limit the choice of matches screened. The result, potentially,



The film of Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch*: football is a topic at the heart of Britain's culture

is that the consumer pays more and sees less. If the televised football market was not restricted by the existence of a cartel, the argument is that clubs would then sell their rights individually and in competition with each other, resulting in lower prices and more matches on more channels. This is how markets operate in other industries and, in effect,

the OFT is applying the same principles to football as it would to any other business activity. If in any other industry a similar horizontal cartel were established, people would want to be assured that the OFT believed it to be operating for consumers' benefit. A cartel of petrol companies, for example, agreeing the selling

price of a litre of fuel, would almost certainly be illegal, because it would keep prices artificially high. "Football is a sport that happens to be a business rather than a business that happens to be a sport," Mr Banks says. This is a good soundbite, but it means nothing. The OFT is not examining the game of football, but rather the way in

which it conducts its business, and it is right to do so. What Mr Banks should be concentrating on is not whether the OFT should have the right to examine the business of football, but whether the way football is run is in the interest of consumers and the game.

There is no reason a football club should not have its conduct and agreements scrutinised under the competition rules and this has long been recognised in Europe. The Bosman ruling on transfers, which means that players out of contract with their clubs are free to move without their clubs being able to demand a transfer fee, is now an established part of the game in England and the whole of Europe. Football generates billions of pounds a year and national competition authorities have a duty to keep under review an industry of this size.

In applying the rules, the OFT should, of course, recognise the special nature of football. It may well be necessary to apply the competition laws in the light of the fact that unrestricted business competition may give too much power to the media companies and large clubs and drive weaker rivals out of business. This would take from football the very thing that it thrives upon: teams, competition and a special place in our culture.

The court case cannot be considered in isolation from other recent events. BSkyB has played a clever game — its bid for Manchester United means that it has an insurance policy should this court case go the wrong way. It is difficult to see the Premier League losing this case and also BSkyB being prevented from completing the acquisition.

It is also worth noting that the fact a court case has been necessary to air the issues of broadcasting rights highlights the inadequacies of the present legal structure. In future, and with the introduction of the Competition Act in March 2000, it is likely that such problems will be addressed before contracts are signed under the new UK clearance regime.

● The author, a partner at Everheds, specialises in EU and competition law.

Why the entente is not so cordiale

They are aggressive, arrogant and uncouth. These are some of the more pleasant things the French say about English lawyers. Anger has been growing over the rapid expansion of the Parisian offices of City law firms, culminating in a vitriolic article in the news magazine *Le Point* this month denouncing "English imperialism".

Gallic equivalents complained about the way their British counterparts had headhunted top Parisian commercial lawyers, and sometimes teams of lawyers, with promises of earnings of more than £100,000 a year.

The controversy has arisen because City firms are attempting to strengthen their presence on the Continent, particularly in Paris and Frankfurt. Most have tried to expand through alliances with continental partners. Linklaters, for example, last year announced a federation with German, Belgian, Dutch and Swedish firms. Cameron McKenna is planning a similar move.

But such associations do not always run smoothly, especially when they run into Franco-British hostility. Last June, for instance, France's largest cabinet, Gide-Loyrette-Noel, broke off a ten-year association with Allen & Overy.

Then, last month, another French firm, de Pardieu, abandoned plans for an alliance with Allen & Overy. Lucie Maurel-Aubert, a lawyer at Gide, told *Le Point*: "They wanted to impose their own brand name and to take our markets. We wanted an association where we would complement each other."

That was had enough for Gide, which, with 350 lawyers and an annual turnover of Fr600 million (about £63 million), is a giant by French standards. But worse followed as five of its leading commercial lawyers left for Allen & Overy, another ten for Linklaters and one, last week, for Freshfields.

Other French firms also face what they deem to be unwarranted attacks of this sort. Olivier Pichot, a partner specialising in legal recruitment with the international headhunters Tasa Worldwide, claims: "The English have an approach that is aggressive and colonialist. They think they may lose out because Britain is not in the euro, so they are trying to buy up whole teams and structures in Paris in the hope of becoming operational here very quickly."

M Pichot says that City law firms have been promising to double the revenue of French lawyers earning between Fr500,000 and Fr700,000 a year. "But this approach is bound to fail," he says. "They have been going to the crime of Parisian lawyers and saying 'How much do you want? We are pre-

pared to buy you.' They are often turned down because they do not realise that though the French may be ready to sell themselves, they do not want to lose their identity. The English have tried to go too fast, and they have made too many mistakes."

French lawyers say that their firms are smaller, their development stunted by the codified system that leaves less room for legal manoeuvre than under the common law tradition, and less cut-throat. A senior partner in a Parisian firm, who asked not to be named, says: "The only thing that seems to matter to the English is money. The City firms are real economic war machines that hardly care about the law at all. Here, we see ourselves much more as a fraternity concerned with our profession."

The City, not unnaturally, views things differently, as Stephan Denyer, the regional managing partner for Europe at Allen & Overy, argues: "What we are seeking is long-term, measured development and we would be silly to do things in an unnecessarily aggressive way. We do not go around luring people in Paris or anywhere else, but it is a case that good lawyers are attracted to us because of our development."

The firm's Paris office, he explains, employs 37 people and has doubled in size over recent months, as has the Frankfurt bureau. Within four years, only half of Allen & Overy lawyers in its offices around the world will be British, compared with 70 per cent at present. "This," he adds, "is due to client demand."

Peter Kent, a senior partner at the Paris office of Slaughter & May, says: "I know that some French firms have criticised the London law firms in Paris for engaging in what they consider to be competitive practices, but I do not subscribe to this view. You cannot criticise the English firms for what they have done. It has all been legitimate. They have simply been good at promoting themselves."

Gilles August, the founder of August et Debouzy, one of the few Parisian firms to flourish in recent years, agrees. "The English are aggressive, but you cannot hold that against them," he says. "They have the right to do what they have done. The French must simply follow their example. They are entirely capable of doing so. That is the law of business. You adapt or you die."

The English are aggressive and colonialist

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Tel: 0171 404 4800 Fax: 0171 405 4267
email: clerks@13oldsquare.law.co.uk

Payments to patient are not for mother

In re the Estate of B (Deceased)

Before Mr Justice Jonathan Parker

[Judgment January 22]

Where the Court of Protection made monetary contributions on behalf of B against the area health authority and in May 1986 a final award of damages was made in the sum of £250,000.

In July 1985, a bungalow was purchased for the joint occupation of B and IB.

B paid 75 per cent of the purchase price pursuant to a direction from the Court of Protection and IB paid the balance.

On B's death, her 75 per cent beneficial share in the property vested in her estate on a resulting trust and passed on her intestacy to IB and PR in equal shares.

On March 6, 1997 IB issued her application for leave to commence proceedings for reasonable financial provision under the 1975 Act, leave being granted by Master Bragge on February 10, 1998.

Section 1 of the 1975 Act contained provisions as to who could make an application under the Act. Section 1(1) listed the five categories of persons including:

"(a) any person (not being a person included in the foregoing paragraphs of this subsection) who immediately before the death of the deceased was being maintained, wholly or partly, by the deceased."

To qualify as an applicant under section 1(1)(e), IB had to satisfy the court, inter alia, that (i) at the date of her death B was making a substantial contribution in money or

her mother could care for her, and the meeting of that need naturally and inevitably meant that IB would be indirectly benefited both by the provision of joint accommodation and by B's regular contribution to the running of expenses of the joint household.

In his Lordship's judgment, however, common sense led inevitably to the conclusion that IB was not dependent for the purposes of section 1(1)(e) of the 1975 Act.

In the first place the monetary contributions made by the Court of Protection on B's behalf to the provision of joint accommodation and to the running of the joint household, being made in the exercise of the Court of Protection's statutory power to provide for the maintenance of B could not properly be characterised as a contribution towards the reasonable needs of IB.

It was an indisputable fact that the "reasonable needs" in respect of which the payments were made were those of IB but of B. The fact that they also had the effect of relieving some indirect and incidental personal benefit on IB could not serve to alter their character as to them into a contribution towards the reasonable needs of IB.

In the second place, any doubt as to the character of that contribution was dispelled when one brought into account the requirement of assumption of responsibility.

After all, B's pre-eminence need was to be housed in suitable accommodation with her mother, so that

stential contribution in money or her mother's worth towards the reasonable needs of IB and (ii) B had "assumed responsibility" for the maintenance of IB for the purposes of section 3(4) of the Act.

On the first question, his Lordship said that section 95(1) of the Mental Health Act 1983 conferred on the Court of Protection, with respect to the property and affairs of the patient, a power to do all such things as appeared to be necessary or expedient for the maintenance or other benefit of the patient and the maintenance or other benefit of members of the patient's family.

It was common ground that in the instant case no direction was made by the Court of Protection pursuant to section 95(1) of the 1983 Act for payments to be made to IB otherwise than in her capacity as B's receiver; that is to say no direction was made for payments to be made to IB for her own maintenance or benefit.

All the payments made by the Court of Protection were made out of the fund representing the damages award and they were made for the maintenance and benefit of B.

However, there could be no doubt that a side-effect of the payments made by the Court of Protection for the maintenance and benefit of B was to the benefit of IB also.

After all, B's pre-eminence need was to be housed in suitable accommodation with her mother, so that

ing defence to infringement of copyright, and referred to *Pro Sieben Media AG v Carlton UK Television Ltd* (The Times January 7, 1999).

Fair dealing was concerned with the genuineness of the intentions and motives of the user of the copyright material to report current events and the extent to which it was fair and reasonable in all the circumstances to make as extensive a use as was in fact made of the copyright material. The question was whether the copying was of a degree and one of fact and impression.

The first hurdle to be surmounted was to establish that the dealing with the copyright work was part of an exercise of reporting current events.

The critical question was whether the defendant's daily programme of circulating and distributing cuttings fairly fell within the language of section 30(2).

The cuttings went far beyond reporting current events. The course followed by the defendant did not constitute fair dealing.

In copying the cuttings from the newspapers the defendant had infringed the copyright of the plaintiff in typographical arrangement and the plaintiff was entitled to relief.

Solicitors: Herbert Smith; Mr Robert Ivens.

On the facts, it was impossible to infer that B, via the Court of Protection, assumed responsibility for the maintenance of IB for the purposes of section 3(4) of the 1975 Act.

Although the Court of Protection had a power under section 95(1) of the 1983 Act to make provision for the maintenance of IB it never exercised that power.

Even if it had done so, his Lordship doubted if the inference could have been drawn that by doing so it had assumed responsibility for IB's maintenance.

After all, having once exercised that power by making regular payments for the maintenance of IB, the Court of Protection could, at any time thereafter, have ceased to make such payments, with the consequence that IB could not have counted on the maintenance payments continuing.

Moreover, it was questionable whether the power to maintain a patient's family empowered the Court of Protection to assume responsibility for the maintenance of that person.

Since IB on the undisputed facts could not bring herself within section 1(1)(e) of the 1975 Act, the court had no jurisdiction to entertain her claim under section 2 of that Act.

Accordingly, IB's application was bound to fail.

Solicitors: Law Hurst Taylor, Westcliff-on-Sea; Dutton & Hoole, Southend-on-Sea.

Which course involves least risk of injustice?

Nikitenko v Leboeuf Lamb Greene & Macrae (a Firm) and Another

Before Mr Richard McComb, QC

[Judgment December 10]

When considering an application for a mandatory order on an interlocutory basis, the overriding concern of the court was as to which course was likely to involve the least risk of injustice if it turned out to be wrong.

While the court should usually feel a high degree of assurance that the applicant would be able to establish his right at trial before making a mandatory order in his favour, making such an order at an interlocutory stage might be justified in the absence of that high degree of assurance where the risk of injustice if the injunction was refused sufficiently outweighed the risk of injustice if it was granted.

Mr Richard McComb, QC, sitting as a deputy Chancery Division judge, said he was asked to apply by motion of the plaintiff, Mr Oleg Nikitenko, for certain declarations as to his entitlement to documents in the hands of the first defendant, Leboeuf Lamb Greene & Macrae, a firm of solicitors, and the second defendant, Mr Oleg Simonov, relating to the affairs of 18 companies ultimately owned by Mr Nikitenko and Mr Simonov.

The plaintiff sought an order that the defendant be required to produce to the plaintiff all documents in its possession, custody or control which related to the affairs of the 18 companies.

Mr Richard McComb, QC, sitting as a deputy Chancery Division judge, said he was asked to apply by motion of the plaintiff, Mr Oleg Nikitenko, for certain declarations as to his entitlement to documents in the hands of the first defendant, Leboeuf Lamb Greene & Macrae, a firm of solicitors, and the second defendant, Mr Oleg Simonov, relating to the affairs of 18 companies ultimately owned by Mr Nikitenko and Mr Simonov.

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The first concerned "Alden," a company against which Mr Nikitenko had brought a winding-up petition in the Grand Court of the Cayman Islands.

The second concerned proceedings in the Commercial Court between two companies called DNHS Ltd and DNHS Ltd.

The third concerned proceedings in the Commercial Court between two companies called DNHS Ltd and DNHS Ltd.

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The fourteenth concerned proceedings in the Commercial Court between two companies called DNHS Ltd and DNHS Ltd.

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The twenty-eighth concerned proceedings in the Commercial Court between two companies called DNHS Ltd and DNHS Ltd.

The twenty-ninth concerned proceedings in the Commercial Court between two companies called DNHS Ltd and DNHS Ltd.

The thirtieth concerned proceedings in the Commercial Court between two companies called DNHS Ltd and DNHS Ltd.

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claims property as he might be advised.

The evidence, even if it went only as to belief, of the solicitor who had been primarily involved in the matter to date was not to be lightly brushed aside on an interlocutory motion in the circumstances of this case.

Two potential injustices were to be weighed in the scale first that the plaintiff was allowed to seek immediately documents that he should not have been allowed to see at all, and second, that the plaintiff was prevented from seeing now, rather than later documents which he should in fact have been allowed to see immediately.

The hypothetical wrong to Mr Simonov was unlikely to be done. His Lordship was not convinced that the present state of the Cayman action called for the disclosure of the documents now as demanded, as the respondent had offered to consent to the winding-up of Alden Ltd, the principal relief sought in the position, which was ordered by the Cayman court following the hearing on September 10.

Similarly in respect of the DNHS litigation there was no evidence of injustice to the plaintiff were he not to have sight of these papers now, or of the relevance of the papers sought to the DNHS litigation.

By contrast the plaintiff had been able to point to a specific and imminent need to see the Falkland documents, whereas Mr Davis was unable to point to any countervailing prejudice that might be suffered by his client if the injunction were granted.

Despite not feeling the high degree of assurance that the plaintiff's claim was likely to succeed, his Lordship was prepared to make a limited order to require those documents relating to Falkland to be produced to the plaintiff within a reasonable timescale, subject to a cross-undertaking in damages and an undertaking by the plaintiff not to use such documents otherwise than in relation to the Falkland litigation without further leave of the court.

Solicitors: Stephenson Harwood; Leboeuf Lamb Greene & Macrae; Holman Fenwick & Wilton.

(b) The time and date of death of the deceased as recorded in the Register of Deaths.

(c) In any case where the name of the deceased or by which the deceased was known differed from that recorded in the register, that name shall also be included in the oath or in the notice, as may be.

(d) The name and date of birth and death of the deceased as recorded in the register shall be included in the oath or in the notice, as may be.

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Circulating press cuttings went beyond fair dealing

Newspaper Licensing Agency Ltd v Marks and Spencer plc

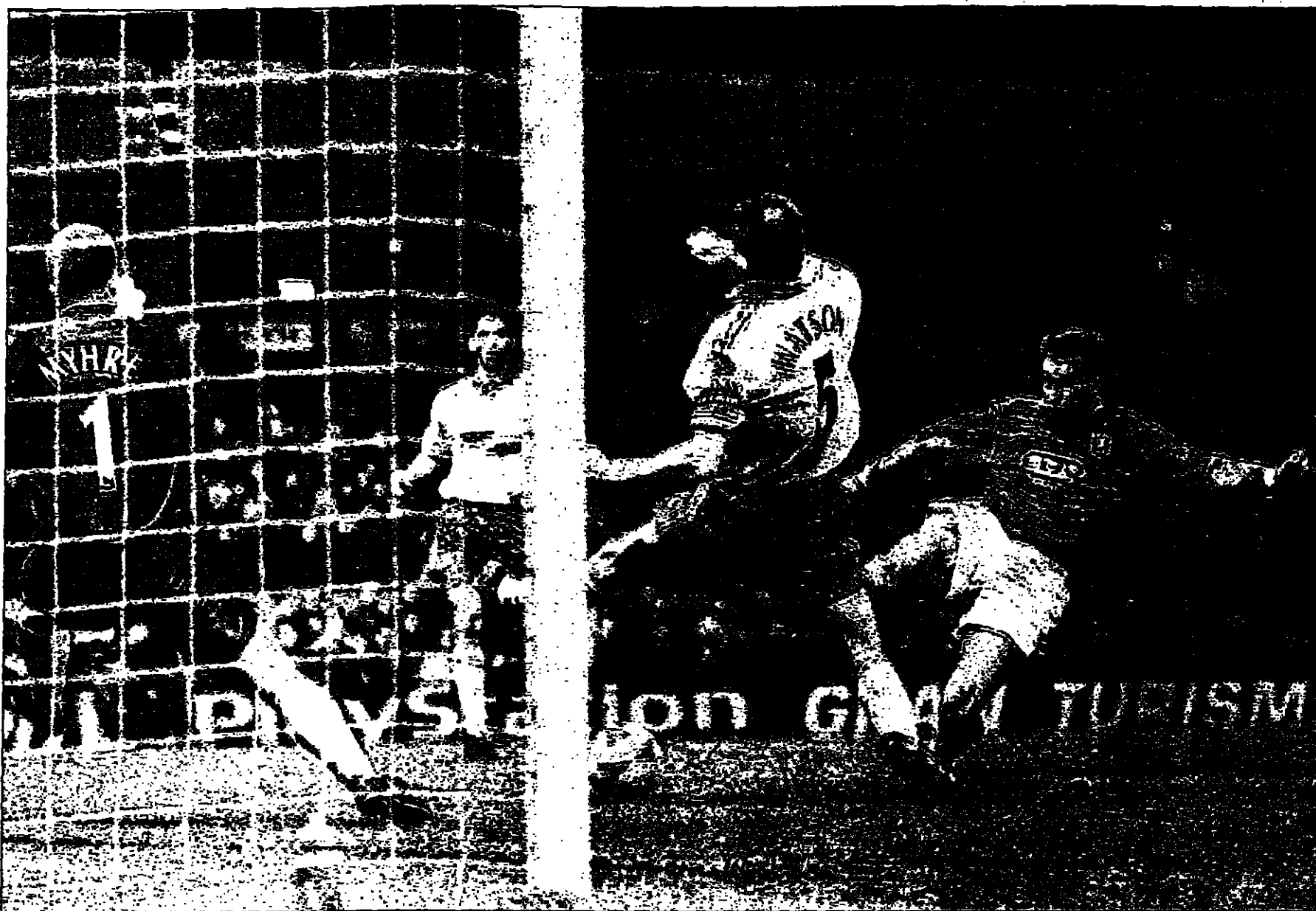
Before Mr Justice Lightman

[Judgment January 19]

A daily programme of circulating and distributing cuttings of articles from newspapers went beyond reporting current events within the meaning of the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 so as to give rise to the fair dealing defence afforded by section 30(2) of that Act.

Mr Justice Lightman so held in a reserved judgment in the Chancery Division giving judgment for the Newspaper Licensing Agency Ltd in its claim that Marks and

Spencer plc had infringed its copyright in typographical arrangement.



Paul Merson scores Aston Villa's third goal in their comprehensive defeat of Everton, the only match that scored Fantasy points last week. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Aston Villa victory opens six-point gap at the top

This week, because only one Premiership game has been played in the past seven days, there is no award of a weekly prize and no ON-Target numbers. Prizes will be rolled over to next week — so watch out!

The player list (right) has been updated to include last Monday's game between Aston Villa and Everton. As a result of Villa's 3-0 win, positions on our leaderboard have altered, with Robert Little's team, Broken Arrow, extending its lead over Phil Clarke's Shabadi United from a single point to an impressive six.

Note that the Villa victory, which included two goals (worth six points) for Julian Joachim, and three-point clean sheets for goalkeeper Michael Oakes and defenders Gareth Barry, Ugo Ehiogu and Gareth Southgate, will not count towards the next weekly prize; the weekly winner announced on these pages in a week's time will be decided solely on the points scored in games played on Saturday January 30 and Sunday January 31.

Nevertheless, the points scored in that game could be decisive in the race for the monthly prize of £1,000 plus £100-worth of sports equipment. The January winner of which will be announced next week. Any team including two-goal Julian Joachim as well as Steve Watson (who provided an assist for the third goal) and Paul Merson (who scored it) will have done well. On the other hand, Michael Ball, the Everton full-back who appears in many of the leading Fantasy teams, scored minus two as a result of

being part of a defence that conceded three goals, and the totals of many of the leaders could suffer as a result.

Remember that Watson and Merson, like Dion Dublin, were transferred to Villa from other clubs after the beginning of the season.

and may therefore be selected in the same Fantasy League team, as they are counted as still belonging to their original clubs.

ON-Target numbers will appear again next week. If your weekly team total according to the player

lists matches the printed numbers, follow the instructions to find out if you have won the weekly ON-Target prize of £500 cash, or one of the runner-up prizes.

Next weekend, for once, a full programme of ten Premiership matches will be completed on Saturday and Sunday, and there are some promising fixtures.

The first to catch the eye is the visit of Chelsea to Highbury, where Gianluca Vialli's team, shorn of much of its striding power, must try to breach the division's most impenetrable defence to guarantee a further week at the top of the table. Villa, behind them only on goal difference, face a tricky trip to Newcastle, who will be smarting at allowing Charlton Athletic a last-gasp equaliser in their previous match, and Manchester United go to The Valley, where the home side will believe that the end of their eight-match losing streak represents the turning point of their season. Unfortunately, they will have to prove it against a team that scored six times in their previous game at Leicester.

Elsewhere, Darren Huckerby, the in-form striker, will be out to see whether Liverpool's recent defensive improvement is real or imaginary, and expect a tight, low scoring encounter between Wimbledon and West Ham at Selhurst Park. Why? For the simple reason that, when they met at Upton Park, the Hammers squandered a three-goal lead, losing 4-3. Harry Redknapp, the manager, will be doing his utmost to ensure that there is no repeat of that defensive catastrophe.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAYERS FROM HERE

Columns show: code, name, club, weekly points, total points, value (£m)

CODE	NAME	CLUB	WEEKLY	TOTAL	VALUE
101	A. Cole	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
102	D. Beckham	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
103	M. Owen	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
104	S. Duff	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
105	P. Duff	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
106	T. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
107	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
108	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
109	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
110	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
111	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
112	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
113	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
114	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
115	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
116	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
117	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
118	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
119	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
120	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
121	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
122	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
123	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
124	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
125	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
126	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
127	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
128	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
129	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
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FULL BACKS

CODE	NAME	CLUB	WEEKLY	TOTAL	VALUE
201	A. Cole	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
202	D. Beckham	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
203	M. Owen	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
204	S. Duff	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
205	P. Duff	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
206	T. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
207	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
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299	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5
300	J. Henson	ARS	3.7	10.0	2.5

LEADERBOARD

TEAM	POINTS
Broken Arrow	280
Shabadi United	274
Philly Utd	272
Robbie's Rovers	270
Philly Utd	268

TENNIS

Powerful Spadea pulls the strokes to outwit Agassi

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN MELBOURNE

IT WAS as poor a performance as any that Andre Agassi has contrived in a decade of largely golden memories. The player he dismissed as a "four-year-old" ten months ago shattered any lasting illusions that Agassi still has the substance to win a grand-slam title.

Agassi is unlikely to find so attractive an opportunity as at this Australian Open. A route once littered with barriers has parted like the Red Sea and yet Agassi has been found wanting. That knowledge will make Agassi's defeat one of the hardest he has had to bear.

Vincent Spadea, whose nerve held firm when Agassi briefly threatened to indulge in gamesmanship, was Agassi's first opponent to be ranked in the world's top 50. Agassi appeared impressive when roughing up inferiors in the early rounds, but he collapsed when matched, blow for blow, in this fourth-round tussle.

It was apparent last year that Agassi's eight-month absence had dulled the fizz from his game. He attributed his poor grand-slam record in 1998 to his fervent pursuit of a world ranking commensurate with his talent. This time, he

came here fresh and supposedly primed for the fight. He showed little of that in succumbing to Spadea, whose own attitude was faultless in a match rendered monotonous by do-or-die hitting.

The comments Agassi made about Spadea, back in March, clearly rankled his fellow American. So much so that Agassi, seeded No 5, has lost two subsequent encounters between the pair. Mind you, Spadea looked more like the vanquished when he related his tale of victory.

His slumped posture hardly squared with one who, in his own words, has just achieved his biggest accomplishment to date. "Well, I didn't end world hunger or anything extravagant like that," he said. What Spadea, the world No 44, may have done is to find a balance within his personal arrangements. His father, Vincent, has taken too paternal an interest in his career. Indeed, Agassi had also ventured that Spadea, 24, could scale the heights if he loosened his father's overbearing embrace.

Spadea made that break towards the end of last year and has reaped an immediate

dividend. He has never previously advanced beyond the fourth round of any grand slam; now he plays the unseeded Tommy Haas, of Germany, for a semi-final place.

Agassi opened the match as though affronted by Spadea's presence on the same court. He flailed wildly off both wings, racking up an error count of suicidal proportions. "When I get a little discouraged, a lot of things start breaking down," he said with rare understatement.

There was more to it than that. Whenever Spadea struck a clean ground stroke — and he struck several — Agassi attempted to strike back even harder. It was little wonder that a host of pulped balls were tossed, at regular intervals, to the scrapheap.

"He is used to dictating the play and running people around," Spadea reflected of his opponent, "but I am capable of hitting the ball as big as him." He also read Agassi's intent, often anticipating the direction of shot before Agassi had even swung his racket in anger.

So much so that Agassi appeared uninterested when Spadea served for the match. He made no effort to run down the last two points, and was humbled 6-1, 7-5, 6-7, 6-3 in 2hrs 40 mins. A count of 71 unforced errors told its own story about the paucity of Agassi's performance.

Spadea conforts Haas after the latter brushed aside Fabrice Santoro, of France, 6-2, 6-2, 7-5. Like Spadea, Haas, 20, is enjoying his most profitable grand-slam run on his second visit here. Unlike Spadea, Haas has yet to meet a seed in a tournament where those accorded that status have performed abjectly. At least Agassi was keeping good company.

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, seeded No 10, escaped the rot yesterday. The Russian made hard work of beating Andrei Pavel, of Romania, who rallied from two sets down before succumbing 6-3, 7-6, 6-7, 3-6, 6-4.

Of the four men's seeds remaining, two collide in the quarter-finals tomorrow when Kafelnikov, of Russia, confronts Todd Martin, of the United States, yesterday accounted for Wayne Black, of Zimbabwe, in straight sets.

A significant upset loomed in the women's event when, on a sweltering day, Martina Hingis, seeded No 2, left the court for a ten-minute break after shattering the first two sets with Amanda Coetzer, the



Cap that hard-hitting Spadea plays a backhand during his four-set victory over Agassi

Graf and Seles still stirred by love of game

Julian Muscat savours the renewal of a rivalry that has been all too rare

AS Andre Agassi, one of the game's icons, departed inconspicuously from the men's singles in the Australian Open yesterday, two more advanced to a quarter-final pairing in the women's competition that evokes memories of a rivalry cruelly arrested in its tracks.

In a tournament yielding upset after upset, the senses were stirred when Steffi Graf and Monica Seles won through to confront each other tomorrow. It will be their fourteenth encounter since they first met in the French Open semi-finals a decade ago.

At that time, Graf, of Germany, and Seles, Yugoslavia-born but now a United States citizen, were the game's irresistible force and immovable object. Between them, they won 21 of the 24 grand-slam tournaments between 1988 and 1993 — after which Seles was stabbed by a supporter of Graf's when playing in Hamburg. The rivalry that was sure to develop was never to reach fruition.

The pair have met twice in the grand-slam arena since Seles, her mind scarred more than her body, returned to the game in 1995. In that year, Graf defeated Seles in the US Open final after one of the finest matches in memory. Graf duplicated the verdict in the Flushing Meadows final 12

months later. However, their lives have run along divergent off-court paths since Seles was stabbed.

Seles was troubled by the stomach cancer that ultimately was to claim her father, Karol, in May last year. Graf, meanwhile, has been plagued by injuries and the scandal of her father and business manager, Peter, serving a jail sentence for tax evasion. These circumstances served to dilute a rivalry that would have eclipsed all others.

Graf, 29, has accrued 21 grand-slam titles. Seles, 25, has 12. Remarkably, Seles has yet to lose in the 39 matches she has played in Australia. The holder of four Australian Open titles, Seles is also unbeaten over 20 matches in Canada. Graf leads their meetings 9-4, but Seles triumphed in their only encounter here — in the 1993 Australian Open final.

These days, both women compete without the burning intensity that governed their respective youths. Seles — who prevailed yesterday 6-0, 6-3 over Sandrine Testud, seeded No 14 — said of her reunion with Graf: "I am really looking forward to playing her. The only reason both of us are still playing is because we just love the game. Both of us want to have challenges like this one."



Seles, left, and Graf have fought back after personal setbacks



RESULTS

MEN

SINGLES: Fourth round: V. Spadea (US) 6-1, 7-5, 6-3; T. Haas (US) 6-1, 7-5, 6-3; T. Martin (US) 6-1, 7-5, 6-3; Y. Kafelnikov (Russia) 6-3, 7-6, 6-7, 3-6, 6-4.

DOUBLES: Third round: G. Kuerten (Bel) and N. Pietrangeli (Bel) 6-1, 6-1; M. Tschirren (Austria) 6-1, 6-1; P. Galbraith (US) and P. Hearn (Bel) 6-1, 6-1; M. Mami (Bel) and A. Onichiev (Russia) 6-4, 6-4.

WOMEN

SINGLES: Fourth round: S. Graf (Ger) 6-1, 6-1; M. Seles (US) 6-1, 6-1; S. Testud (F) 6-0, 6-3; M. Hingis (Sri Lanka) 6-1, 6-1; M. Pierce (F) 6-1, 6-1; K. Kournikova (Russia) 6-0, 6-4.

DOUBLES: Third round: F. Labat (Arg) and D. Van Rossum (Bel) 6-1, 6-1; E. Caccamo (Bel) and J. Hladik (Czech) 6-1, 6-1; L. Davenport (US) and N. Pietrangeli (Bel) 6-1, 6-1; C. Cisse and R. Dragoni (Porto) 6-0, 6-3.

Result (seed) and A. Mouratoglou (F) 6-1, 6-1; C. Cisse and R. Dragoni (Porto) 6-0, 6-3.

Mixed Doubles: Second round: D. Johnson and P. Kumbhar (US) 6-1, 6-1; M. Tschirren (Austria) 6-1, 6-1; C. Caccamo (Bel) 6-1, 6-1; M. Mami (Bel) 6-1, 6-1; M. Mami (Bel) 6-1, 6-1; M. Mami (Bel) 6-1, 6-1.

Boys: First round: L. Childs (GB) 6-1, 6-1; L. Childs (GB) 6-1, 6-1; L. Childs (GB) 6-1, 6-1; L. Childs (GB) 6-1, 6-1.

Girls: First round: L. Childs (GB) 6-1, 6-1; L. Childs (GB) 6-1, 6-1; L. Childs (GB) 6-1, 6-1; L. Childs (GB) 6-1, 6-1.

EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

THE TIMES

THE TIMES

EAT OUT FOR £5

OUR NEW Eat Out for £5 Restaurant Guide, this year in association with Diners Club International, is bigger and better than ever. Given away free with yesterday's Times, the guide lists more than 820 restaurants throughout Britain, including more than 100 restaurants in the Forie group, where you and up to five friends can enjoy a special Times menu for just £5 each. A further 70 participating restaurants are listed today on page 44 and an extra five are below. Restaurants where you can dine out in style for next to nothing include the Warehouse Brasserie, Colchester, and the Falconberg Arms, Coxwold, Yorkshire, voted the two most popular restaurants by Times readers last year.

At a few eateries you get three courses for £5, and at some a free glass of wine is included in the price. Simply collect two differently numbered tokens from The Times and/or The Sunday Times and attach them to a voucher. The more tokens and vouchers you collect, the more restaurants you may dine in. Bookings must be made in advance and you should tell the restaurant you want The Times £5 offer and confirm what your £5 meal consists of. The offer is valid until March 7, 1999. Offer available in Britain only.

THE TIMES EAT OUT FOR £5 VOUCHER

This voucher, with two differently numbered tokens from The Times and/or The Sunday Times attached, entitles the bearer and up to five other people to eat out for £5 each at any one of the restaurants taking part in this offer. You must pre-book with the restaurant, confirming the number of courses you get for £5. Offer subject to availability and ends on March 7, 1999.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Day Tel: _____

Which one of the following age groups do you fall into? ☐ 15-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+

If you buy The Times, on which days do you usually buy it? ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Don't usually buy The Times

Which national daily newspaper(s) do you buy at least once a week? _____

Which national Sunday newspaper(s) do you buy (insert number) (4 copies per month)? _____

Which national Sunday newspaper(s) do you buy (insert number) (4 copies per month)? _____

If you would prefer not to receive this information and others from organisations carefully selected by The Times, please tick ☐

ADDRESS: Trafford Room, Crowne Plaza Manchester/The Midland, Peter St, Manchester; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, 2 courses; Third 22; 0161-235 3333 The Cattle Grill, 36-38 The Cattle, Leeds; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, 2 courses; Third 22; 0113-246 3970 Caprice Gourmet Gallery, The Copthorne Manchester, Clippens Quay, Salford; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, 2 courses; 0161-423 7321 Sakey Pizzeria, Regent St, Cambridge; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, 2 courses; 01223 358 478 and 01835 9892.

ADDRESS: China Blues, Parkway, Camden, London NW1; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, Sun; Dinner - M, T, W, Sun; The Mosaic Arms, 28 High St, Maybury, Hampton, N. Croydon; Lunch - M, W, F, Dinner - T, Th, 2 courses; 01285 850184 Tutu L'Auberge, Tibbott Hill Rd, Godstone, Surrey; Lunch - T, W, Th, F, S, Sun; Dinner - T, W, Th, F, S, 2 courses; 01882 862318 The Brasserie, George Hotel, High St, Colchester, Essex; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, Dinner - M, T, W, Th, 2 courses; Third 22; 01206 578494 Longfellow Restaurant, Hampton Lane, Catherine-de-

Barnes, Solihull, West Midlands; Lunch - T, W, Th, F, 2 courses; Third 22; 0121-705 0547 Golden Pheasant Hotel, Rushmore, Caversham; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, Sat; Dinner - M, T, W, Th, 2 courses; Third 22; 01235 573688 Clements Room Restaurant, Aurora Garden Hotel, Bolton Ave, Windsor; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, 2 courses; 01753 831394 Yewell Court Hotel West Coker Rd, Tiverton; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, 2 courses; 01935 863746 The Sunnyside Chapel Lane, Carrington, Weymouth; Lunch - M, T, W, Th, F, S, Dinner - M, T, W, Th, F, S, 2 courses; 01305 832145

Olympic family will stand by Samaranch

That's the future. So are the claims that Sydney, Amsterdam, Berlin, Melbourne and Quebec, winners and losers in the bidding game, all spread excessive largesse to the Olympic family. Over here, from Manchester and possibly from Birmingham, there are cries that the foul nature of opposing bids robbed them of millions of pounds spent entertaining IOC members. Aside from the inevitable question of whether this "gross hospitality," as Manchester's Sir Bob Scott called it, was itself an inducement to look kindly on



hollow rings. Two positive aspects have already emerged from the scandal. We learn that the IOC is to establish an Ethics Commission, composed of "senior persons, a majority of whom will be independent, outside members", and that, thank goodness, no longer will 114 members traipse around the globe with their goody bags, but an

Gold, a fearless campaigner in his day against drug abuse, has little faith in a vote of confidence ousting the IOC president. "It will be an open show of hands by a body of men and women, over 50 per cent of whom enjoyed his patronage and cannot condemn him," Gold said. "There is a lack of courage, people will not stand up for principles."

Yet it was a Briçon, Dame Mary Glen-Haig, an honorary member of the IOC, who was questioned before the century modern Olympics in Atlanta in 1996: "Has the challenge presented by Pierre de Coubertin to the youth of the world been honoured? Are we guilty of bowing to man's desire for power in sport? Is there a God named Money?" Questions of weight indeed... questions that will not be answered until the bribery—sorry, misconduct—saga has run its disreputable course.

Prost, right, introduces his drivers, Jarno Trulli, Stephane Sarrazin and Olivier Panis, at the 1999 launch of the Prost-Peugeot team. Photograph: Michel Lipchitz

His confidence was affected badly enough for both he and Alain Prost, his team principal, to decide on a cautious future and Panis 32 has only a one-year contract. Prost said: "He needs to drive 100 per cent this season. Because the car was not good last year, it made his problem. He has to be able to put that behind him now."

For a racing driver to admit to being frightened requires bravery, though Panis refused to unburden himself at the time either to Jarno Trulli, his team-mate, or to Prost. "Alain had enough to worry about without having to listen to me and my worries," Panis said. "But he has been behind me all the way

Doctors had warned him that they could not repair his right leg, fixed with two metal supports from ankle to knee.

If he is to return to winning ways, though, he will need more than his old braver and skill. The Prost-Pengo was unwieldy and impractical last season. Alain Prost hired John Barnard, designer of his world championship-winning McLaren of the 1980s, to try to create a new and more aerodynamic car. Even so, Prost remains cautious. "We have to assume that McLaren and Ferrari will be in front, but then there will be several teams after that," he said. "We want to be competing with them for points. That has to be our goal for this season."

■ BASKETBALL: Michael Olowokandi, the No. 1 pick in the National Basketball Association draft, was released from his contract with Kinder Bologna, the Italian League club, yesterday, leaving him free to join the Los Angeles Clippers.

Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC president, has emphasised that the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney and Salt Lake City Winter Games will not be moved. However, an inquiry will now begin into the statement last week by John Coates, who led the Syd-

However, Zhang Honghai, the head of foreign affairs for the Beijing City Government, said yesterday: "Such dirty things should not happen in Olympic bidding. The IOC should be able to resolve this problem, otherwise the Olympic movement will have no future. We felt at the time it wasn't just sports factors ... but we never imagined there were so many other various factors in the background."

Kaoro Iwata, the leader of the residents' group, said: "We assume that the official subsidies were spent for such illegal purposes as excessive entertainment and suspected vote-buying. The burning of the account book itself supports the suspicion."

Sumitkazu Yamaguchi, a former external affairs officer for the bid committee, has said that he ordered the book's destruction as "there was no space for storage". He added that such records could be "embarrassing" to some IOC members.

BY MARK

ten-year loyalty agreement that both clubs refused to sign would still have to be confronted.

Asked whether he felt that English clubs were ready to turn their backs on the supposedly binding legal agreement, Gareth Davies, the Cardiff chief executive, who also sits on the board of English First-Division Rugby (EFD), said: "I don't know, but if they did, it would not say much for them. As far as I am concerned, it is a two-way thing."

"All our argument is about is finding a level for a professional game. The way things stand, we can't negotiate with the WRU. There is no give and take. We wrote to them three weeks ago with a letter outlining what we felt — and so did a number of other Welsh clubs — was a workable, peaceful solution. We haven't had a reply yet."

He will find out more today at an EFD board meeting in London.

SOUSTER

which is due to hear an update on progress from Tom Walkinshaw, the chairman. Walkinshaw will outline various scenarios in the knowledge that the RFU will insist that the clubs will be liable for fines imposed by the International Rugby Board for playing the unofficial matches that have already cost the union £60,000 in withheld grants.

A senior official said: "The whole English game should not suffer for the action of the clubs. I think the IRB is understanding our position more and accepting the dilemma that their submission to the European Commission places us in."

The clubs themselves also realised that an Anglo-Welsh tournament could fall under the control of the Five Nations Committee, creating the prospect of continued turmoil.

In an attempt to allay the fears of

clubs in England and, in particular, the clubs of Bristol and Worcester, the RFU have decided to restrict any new structure put into place next season would be subject to the principles of the Mayfair Agreement with regards to the issues of relegation and promotion. It also gave assurances that any clubs affected in any proposed changes would be party to any discussions.

Martin Johnson plays his 200th first-team game for Leicester, the league leaders, tonight, when they take Richmond at the Madejski Stadium. Johnson has thrived from last week, with Stuart Poppie, and Craig Joiner, retaining his place at outside centre and Graham Rowntree returns at loosehead prop. Neil Back is doubtful with flu.

Richmond have named a squad, but the only definite non-starter is Adrian Davies. John Davies is expected to make his last appearance before finalising a move to Llanelli on Thursday.

The one significant transfer before the Silk Cut Challenge Cup deadline expired last night was a move by Tony Kemp, the Leeds Rhinos stand-off half, to Wakefield Trinity.

The former Castleford and Newcastle Knights player has signed a two-year deal with the promoted Super League side.

club. Kemp, 31, struggled to make the Leeds side last year and competition at stand-off has increased at Headingley with the addition of Karl Prater from Featherstone Rovers.

Maea David, the Western Samoa utility player, has joined Bramley, of the first division, from Hull Sharks, a year after a broken leg in a pre-season match restricted him to one appearance in the Super League.

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Collymore seeks help for stress and depression

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

STAN COLLYMORE, the temperamental Aston Villa striker, is seeking counselling for stress and depression in an attempt to resurrect his career in the FA Cup Premier League. Neither Collymore nor John Gregory, the Villa manager, was willing to speak publicly about the latest twist in the player's controversial career yesterday, but a statement was issued by the club.

It read: "Stan Collymore has made it clear that pressure and stress have been building up for a long period of time, which culminated in the decision by the club not to consider him fit to play on Saturday. Following this, Stan has decided that he wishes to seek further counselling to help him overcome his current difficulties."

"Following extended meetings throughout the day with both Stan and his representatives, the manager and board of directors of Aston Villa FC have expressed their desire to help Stan through his current problems, as it would with any of its employees."

Doug Ellis, the Villa chairman, was also unavailable to expand on the statement, which was made necessary by Collymore's failure to turn up for the FA Cup fourth-round

tie against Fulham at Villa Park on Saturday, which Fulham won 2-0. Collymore was believed to be angry at Gregory's decision to use him only as a substitute, but Paul Stretford, his agent, claimed that he had visited the club's medical staff and had been diagnosed as "fit".

Gregory took training as usual yesterday morning, but Collymore was not there. When Gregory left the training ground, he declined to discuss the matter. After the meeting between Gregory, Ellis, Collymore and Stretford, which went on into the early evening, the statement was issued with no further



Collymore: problems

comment. While there might be some sympathy if Collymore's apparent plight is genuine, many Villa fans have long been disenchanted by his antics since he joined the club from Liverpool for £7 million in May 1997. The ailment does appear to be catching, too, with Paolo Di Canio, the Sheffield Wednesday striker, and Mark Viduka, the Celtic striker, having cited stress for the recent absences from their respective clubs.

Collymore's day had begun badly when he learnt that he faces a possible driving ban. He failed to turn up at Birmingham magistrates court to answer a charge of driving his Range Rover at 82mph in a 40mph zone in Birmingham on August 25 last year.

With minds focused on Collymore, Villa officials had little time yesterday to contemplate the possible move of Juninho, the Atletico Madrid and former Blackburn midfielder, to Villa Park. Representatives of Atletico visited the Midlands for preliminary talks last week, but Middlesbrough have since emerged as favourites to resign the Brazilian.

Juninho played only as a 66th-minute substitute in Atletico's 2-1 victory against Celta Vigo on Sunday, but reaffirmed his desire to stay in Spain. However, Arrigo Sacchi, the Atletico coach, said that Juninho played no part in his plans. "I appreciate him as a footballer but the problem is that I can't play him and Juan Carlos Valerón together," Sacchi said. "We have two excellent central midfielders but when they have played together, things haven't worked out."

Osvaldo Giraldo, Juninho's father and business adviser, is believed to favour a move to Middlesbrough, who Juninho left for a fee of £12 million 18 months ago. Middlesbrough claim to have first option on Juninho and Steve Gibson, the club chairman, is due to fly to Spain this week for talks. Bryan Robson, the manager, is expected to accompany him.

Though Gregory acknowledges Middlesbrough's option, which is legally binding, he said: "That doesn't mean anything if the player doesn't want to go there."

Mario Vivien Fox is expected to make his debut for West Ham United against Wimbledon on Saturday after completing his £3.5 million transfer from Lens. The Cameroon international, who can play in central midfield or defence, passed a medical yesterday.

O'Neill and Reid aim for same goal

BY MEL WEBB

THERE is much for Leicester City and Sunderland to play for when they meet in the first leg of the Worthington Cup semi-final at the Stadium of Light tonight, not least of which is the restoration of fractured confidence.

Both clubs were eliminated from the FA Cup on Saturday, with a place in Europe beckoning the winners of the competition, both will be anxious to wipe the memory of such recent cup reverses from their minds.

The teams were busy playing the mutual admiration game yesterday, but when it comes to the action tonight, it is likely that quarter will be neither taken, nor given.

"Coming up against a Premiership outfit like Leicester, who I have a lot of respect for, is a tough test," Kevin Ball, the Sunderland captain, said. "They're a league above us and they're doing well. But once on the pitch, it's just two

teams having a right good go at each other."

Martin O'Neill, the Leicester manager, regards Sunderland as a certain for the FA Cup Premiership next season, and has no illusions as to the task facing his side, who have conceded nine goals in their past two matches.

"Sunderland's priority is promotion and, although I'm sure Peter Reid will pour scorn on the idea, sitting pretty in the league might mean them not being fully wound up for a cup game," he said. "But we know it will be tough. Sunderland appear to be playing at Premiership standard already, and the difference in league status will count for nothing when we get on the pitch."

Tony Cottee has a calf strain and, if he is unable to play, Muzzy Izet may have to move up from midfield for the second game running to partner Emile Heskey.



David Hacker and Carolyn Reid, who have been named Hockey Sport 1998 Club Players of the Year, show off their respective silverware in London yesterday (Sydney Friskin writes). Hacker, 34, is the first Welshman to receive the award. He made more than 100 appearances for Wales, though represented Great Britain on only five occasions, being unlucky to have missed selection for the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. He was captain and player-coach of Wales at the Commonwealth Games

in Malaysia last year and successfully led Wales in the European Nations Cup qualifying tournament. Hacker, a teacher at Millfield School, played most of his hockey with Hounslow in the 1980s but has since joined forces with Sean Kerly at Canterbury. Reid, 26, the England international who plays for Hightown, becomes the first goalkeeper to be honoured since Jo Thompson won the award in 1991 (Cathy Harris writes). She produced some excellent performances in

England's international build-up to the World Cup in Utrecht last year, and by the end of the tournament was firmly established as No 1 in the position. Though England could finish only ninth, her season ended on a high note with a Commonwealth silver medal. A teacher at St Nicholas Roman Catholic High School in Hartford, Cheshire, she captained England Under-21s at the 1993 World Cup in Spain, and has won several indoor and outdoor medals in European club competition.

ROWING: SCOTS SEE TRADITIONAL CHALLENGE ON THAMES AS VALUABLE ASSET

Boat Race finds sound investment

BY MIKE ROSEWELL, ROWING CORRESPONDENT

BOTTLES of whisky, rather than gin, were distributed to press men yesterday when it was announced that Aberdeen Asset Management, the Scotland-based investment group, will sponsor the Boat Race for the next three years, with an option for a further three years until 2004.

No definite figure was given, but it is known that Aberdeen Asset Management will be more than matching Beefeater, the Boat Race sponsor for 12 years up to 1998, which handed more than £1.4 million over the last three years of

its involvement with the event. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the news was received with some relief by Duncan Clegg, the race organiser, who has been chasing potential sponsors since 1997, when Beefeater announced that 1998 would be its final year of commitment.

Both the Oxford and Cambridge squads have had to adjust their training expenditure since September, but can now concentrate more fully on the task in hand, a fact confirmed by Charlie Humphreys,

the Oxford president, who said of the deal yesterday: "It makes our lives a lot easier."

Clegg said: "In the context of today's sponsorship market-place, we believe this is an excellent deal. The support means that the Universities will be able to maintain their investment in coaching, training and equipment, which probably produced the fastest two crews ever in 1998."

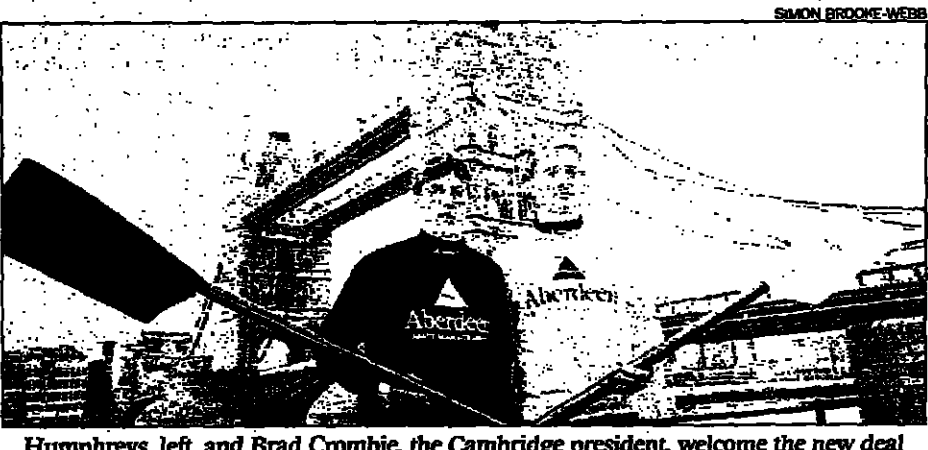
Aberdeen Asset Management manages investments in excess of £14 billion and is

quoted on both the London and Singapore stock exchanges. Martin Gilbert, the chief executive, said: "We are among the top ten unit trust sellers in the country, but our competitors are household names. We want more awareness and we think the Boat Race can give it to us."

Awareness could come from an event that attracts 250,000 to the banks of the River Thames, a domestic television audience of six million and a huge international following, with a potential 400 million people watching in 160 countries.

Moves towards the sponsorship announced yesterday began only just before Christmas when Fred Carr, an Oxford Blue in 1966, when he was a crew-mate of Clegg, mentioned the sponsorship search to an Aberdeen Asset Management employee. This set the ball rolling swiftly, in Clegg's words, to "a compatible sponsor that we can live with."

The new sponsor has no intention of moving the Boat Race to Scotland. "It's too cold up there," Gilbert said. Cambridge, with six wins in a row, will race Oxford on the usual course on April 3.



Humphreys, left, and Brad Crombie, the Cambridge president, welcome the new deal

FOR THE RECORD

ATHLETICS

NATIONAL INDOOR ARENA: Birmingham AAA Indoor Championships: Starter: 100m: 11.2 (1.0), 2.0 (1.0), 3.0 (1.0), 4.0 (1.0), 5.0 (1.0), 6.0 (1.0), 7.0 (1.0), 8.0 (1.0), 9.0 (1.0), 10.0 (1.0), 11.0 (1.0), 12.0 (1.0), 13.0 (1.0), 14.0 (1.0), 15.0 (1.0), 16.0 (1.0), 17.0 (1.0), 18.0 (1.0), 19.0 (1.0), 20.0 (1.0), 21.0 (1.0), 22.0 (1.0), 23.0 (1.0), 24.0 (1.0), 25.0 (1.0), 26.0 (1.0), 27.0 (1.0), 28.0 (1.0), 29.0 (1.0), 30.0 (1.0), 31.0 (1.0), 32.0 (1.0), 33.0 (1.0), 34.0 (1.0), 35.0 (1.0), 36.0 (1.0), 37.0 (1.0), 38.0 (1.0), 39.0 (1.0), 40.0 (1.0), 41.0 (1.0), 42.0 (1.0), 43.0 (1.0), 44.0 (1.0), 45.0 (1.0), 46.0 (1.0), 47.0 (1.0), 48.0 (1.0), 49.0 (1.0), 50.0 (1.0), 51.0 (1.0), 52.0 (1.0), 53.0 (1.0), 54.0 (1.0), 55.0 (1.0), 56.0 (1.0), 57.0 (1.0), 58.0 (1.0), 59.0 (1.0), 60.0 (1.0), 61.0 (1.0), 62.0 (1.0), 63.0 (1.0), 64.0 (1.0), 65.0 (1.0), 66.0 (1.0), 67.0 (1.0), 68.0 (1.0), 69.0 (1.0), 70.0 (1.0), 71.0 (1.0), 72.0 (1.0), 73.0 (1.0), 74.0 (1.0), 75.0 (1.0), 76.0 (1.0), 77.0 (1.0), 78.0 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Damp it may be, but it's not on the rise

According to Raising The Roof (BBC2), the walls of your house can be wetter than Dale Winton and, chances are, you still don't need to pay any more for damp — let alone thousands — of pounds to put in a chemical damp-proof course because it's extremely unlikely that you've got rising damp. This leaves just one nagging question in your mind: why aren't there more such programmes on television, lifting the lid on other unpleasant things that we have all long suspected were at best unnecessary, such as self-assessment tax returns, *Supermarket Sweep*, large parts of South Dakota, and the Rev Ian Paisley?

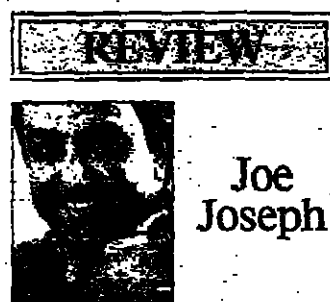
Doubts about rising damp set in the minute you set foot in Venice. Here is a city that is still standing after hundreds of years, and after thousands of floods. On the several occasions that I have visited Venice, not once have I seen a boat

chugging down a canal bearing a sign saying, "Gino's Damp-Proofing — we treat de wetta rotta and de dry rotta. No pallazzo too small!" In all the biographies of Casanova, you never once read of a time when he had to disappoint a lover on account of rising damp. "Can't come over to pleasure you this morning, love. I've got a man from San Marco Damp-Proofing coming round between 8am and 1pm to give me an estimate. He couldn't be more specific, what with all the visits he has to make."

The man we have to thank for opening our eyes is Mike Parrett, who works for Lewisham council as a damp-checker. "In the last nine years," he told us, seated, for some reason, on a boat. "I've not found a single case of rising damp in any of the properties I've tested. I've tested literally thousands." Often he solved the damp by installing proper heating and ventilation. At other times, an existing

damp course had been "bridged", enabling ground-water to bypass the damp course. Parrett is so sceptical that you could no more easily persuade him that Paddy Ashdown's decision to retire as leader of the Liberal Democrats will make a measurable difference to British politics than you could that a British house has rising damp.

Using the hidden camera technique he used to expose dodgy estate agents in the opening programme of the series, the presenter Paul Kenyon set up home in a wetish house that Parrett swore was not suffering from rising damp (there was leaky guttering, a blocked drain, a broken water pipe) and called in the professionals to sort out the problem. Nine estimates — to inject an un-needed chemical damp-proof course — ranged from £300 to well over £5,000. The companies Kenyon invited to survey the prob-



Joe Joseph

lem included some of the best-known names in the business. With luck their phones won't be ringing for a while.

Although Kenyon has the sort of boyish enthusiasm, and the boyish looks, that give the series the air of a particularly proficient school science project, he seems to be making a snappier job of old-fashioned investigation than many grown-up presenters are managing. Of

course, you might fear even more for the damp-proofing companies if Oliver Watson ever gets it into his head to wash their dirty laundry in public.

For the past four weeks in his series *Against the Grain* (BBC2), Watson, a barley farmer from Cambridgeshire, has been doing his best to avoid being invited to the National Farmers' Union annual ball ever again. Watson has ruffled the feathers of many farmers by highlighting the more preposterous of the common agricultural policies under this scheme Britain's farmers have manoeuvred themselves into a position that coalminers and shipyard workers never worked out how to wangle, in which somebody would pay to keep them in business even if nobody wanted their coal or their ships — and even if this meant paying them billions of pounds not to mine coal or build ships at all. Watson, who gets a

£180,000 subsidy cheque from Brussels every year, feels farmers should face the same market forces as hairdressers or dishwashers, and that farming subsidies should be phased out.

This week he championed the use of agrochemicals and genetically engineered food as the only way to feed a world population that is growing by around 80 million people a year. Organically produced food may be the answer for those who can afford it — but what if you can't? Or don't want to? Watson doesn't think organic wheat or carrots taste any different, anyway. But even if they do, what role should the Government play in steering us towards them — any more than in steering us towards buying large, safe, expensive Benleys rather than decrepit, rusty, cheap bangers?

It has been a thought-provoking,

frequently provocative series. In the process Watson has proved himself to be a television natural, with just the right mixture of arrogance and charm to command the camera. With luck we'll be seeing him again — unless Brussels decides it's smarter to pay him not to make more television shows.

Patsy Palmer waits ages to have a baby, then two come along at once. No sooner has she given birth on *EastEnders* than she's giving birth all over again in *Love Story*, shown last night in Channel 4's Shooting Gallery series of shorts. *Love Story* was written and directed by her husband, Nick Love, who cast Palmer as a pregnant heroin addict living in a subterranean hell-hole, whose big-mouthed friend is too busy chasing his next fix to attend the birth. I think that was pretty much it, unless I missed something. It made *EastEnders* look as stylish as a *Kurosawa* film.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (27626)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (1) (83355)
- 7.00am Killy (1) (8207201)
- 9.45 The Vanessa Show (1) (567071)
- 10.05 News; Regional News (1) (746065)
- 11.00 Real Roads (7556442)
- 11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1) (7582021)
- 11.55 News; Regional News (1) (1759597)
- 12.00pm Call My Bluff (34704)
- 12.30 Wipeout (300442)
- 12.55 The Weather Show (1) (55890794)
- 1.00 One O'Clock News (1) (66442)
- 1.30 Regional News (8232021)
- 1.40 Neighbours (1) (6592717)
- 2.05 Inside (1) (7203591)
- 2.55 Body Spies (1) (82882)
- 3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (555788)
- 3.45 The Enchanted Lands: The Adventures of the Wishing Chair (912249)
- 3.55 Hubbub (8039930)
- 4.10 Chipmunks Go to the Movies (582751)
- 4.35 The Really Wild World (1221133)
- 5.00 Newsround (5008982) 5.10 Grange Hill (1) (541897)
- 5.35 Rewind (1) (645591)
- 5.55 Neighbours (1) (1) (108255)
- 6.00 Six O'Clock News (1) (171)
- 6.30 Regional News Magazine (423)
- 7.00 Holiday Mary Nightingale visits Thailand, Douglas holiday in Cyprus, and Late Lunch presents Mel and Sue go rock 'n' roll in Burnham-on-Sea (1) (8220)
- 7.30 EastEnders The day of the inquest brings fresh tension (1) (807)

BBC2

- 7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: The Little Polar Bear (8933779) 7.05 Teletubbies (257238) 7.30 Secret Squirrel and Co (3451258) 7.55 The Peter (268510) 8.20 The Mole (540588) 8.40 The Mole (540588) 8.55 The Mole (540588) 9.00 The Mole (540588) 9.10 The Mole (540588) 9.20 The Mole (540588) 9.30 The Mole (540588) 9.40 The Mole (540588) 9.50 The Mole (540588) 10.00 The Mole (540588) 10.10 The Mole (540588) 10.20 The Mole (540588) 10.30 The Mole (540588) 10.40 The Mole (540588) 10.50 The Mole (540588) 11.00 The Mole (540588) 11.10 The Mole (540588) 11.20 The Mole (540588) 11.30 The Mole (540588) 11.40 The Mole (540588) 11.50 The Mole (540588) 12.00 The Mole (540588) 12.10 The Mole (540588) 12.20 The Mole (540588) 12.30 The Mole (540588) 12.40 The Mole (540588) 12.50 The Mole (540588) 1.00 The Mole (540588) 1.10 The Mole (540588) 1.20 The Mole (540588) 1.30 The Mole (540588) 1.40 The Mole (540588) 1.50 The Mole (540588) 2.00 The Mole (540588) 2.10 The Mole (540588) 2.20 The Mole 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